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ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN NEGRO LITERATURE

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ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN NEGRO LITERATURE

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

V. F. CALVERTON

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PUBLISHERS : NEW YORK

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First Modern Library Edition

1929

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To

WALTER WHITE

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS COURAGE IN THE CAUSE OF HIS PEOPLE, AND IN TENDER APPRECIATION OF THAT FINE, INSPIRING WARMTH WHICH I HAVE FOUND IN HIS FRIENDSHIP.

PREFACE

THERE are a few words that ought to be said in explanation of the nature of this volume. It is an anthology which is representative above everything else. This does not mean that an attempt has not been made in every case to choose work of merit, but that in a number of instances it has been necessary to include material because of its representative value, although it is without fine, literary distinction. Certain nineteenth-century poems, for instance, which have been included are pathetically naïve and sentimental; yet in the development of Negro literature they undoubtedly have their place, and, therefore, have been used. In other words, these stories, poems, essays, and selected chapters from novels, purport simply to represent what the Negro in America has achieved in the art of literary forms.

Certain difficulties inherent in a volume of this kind should be obvious to every reader. In selecting chapters from various novels, there is always the danger that the chapters will seem strange and unconvincing when removed from their context. Naturally, in every case, those chapters have been chosen which stand most definitely apart, and convey meaning and movement within themselves, disengaged though they are from their surrounding substance. In the instance of the spirituals and blues, it is unfortunate that they must appear in this bare form, without notes, but in an anthology of this character the presence of scales would be somewhat incongruous.

Since this is the first anthology of Negro literature which, in terms of historical background as well as diversity of forms, has endeavored to be so inclusive, it is hoped that

it will be excused from inadequacies that are inevitable in such a work. It should be noted, also, that no selections were made from such recent novels as *Banjo, Plum Bun,* and *Passing,* or Walter White's very significant social study, *Rope and Faggot,* because they appeared at a time when it was too late to insert anything from them in this anthology.

In order to organize this volume into its present form, it was necessary to have the aid of many writers and publishers, and to thank them all in this quiet, formal way bespeaks little of the depth of my gratitude. In many cases, the authors of selections included in this volume lent their aid generously in the way of advice and suggestion. It would be extremely ungenerous, indeed, not to mention also, my great indebtedness to Mr. W. C. Handy for his wonderfully kind coöperation in aiding me in the matter of securing certain rights to publish the *Blues* which appear in this collection. For material directly used I am indebted to the following publishers:

The Atlantic Monthly; A. & C. Boni; Century Magazine; Cornhill Publishing Co.; The Carolina Magazine; Duffield and Company; Dodd, Mead & Company; Doubleday, Doran and Company; Horace Liveright, Inc.; Harcourt, Brace and Co.; Harper Brothers; Houghton Mifflin Company; Alfred A. Knopf; McClurg and Company; Macaulay Company; The Modern Quarterly; Opportunity; Vanguard Press; Viking Press; The Lantern.

V. F. C.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE vii

INTRODUCTION 1

V. F. Calverton, "The Growth of Negro Literature"

FICTION

Short Story

Jean Toomer, "Fern" 21
Charles Waddell Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine" 27
Eric Walrond, "The Yellow One" 39
Rudolph Fisher, "Blades of Steel" 53

Novel

Walter White, "The Fire in the Flint" 73
W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Dark Princess" 80
Jessie Fauset, "There Is Confusion" 92
Wallace Thurman, "The Blacker the Berry" . . . 107
Nella Larsen, "Quicksand" 121
Claude McKay, "Home to Harlem" 128
Rudolph Fisher, "Walls of Jericho" 136

DRAMA

Georgia Douglas Johnson, "Plumes" 147
Jonathan Matheus, "*'Cruiter*" 157

POETRY

Phyllis Wheatley, "Imagination" 175
Albert A. Whitman, "Rape of Florida" 175
Frances E. Harper, "Poem Addressed to Women" . 176
James Madison Bell, "The Progress of Liberty" . . 176

PAGE

Joseph S. Cotter, Jr., "The Band of Gideon" . . . 178
James D. Corrothers, "At the Closed Gate of Justice" 179
Paul Laurence Dunbar
"Robert Gould Shaw" 180
"Ode to Ethiopia" 181
"When Malindy Sings" 182
Fenton Johnson, "The New Day" 184
Georgia Douglas Johnson, "I Want to Die While You Love Me" 186
Angelina Weld Grimke, "For the Candle Light" . 187
Countee Cullen
"To You Who Read My Book" 187
"To John Keats, Poet, At Springtime" . . . 191
"Heritage" 192
"To a Brown Girl" 196
"To a Brown Boy" 197
"Tableau" 197
"In Memory of Colonel Charles Young" . . . 198
William Stanley Braithwaite, "Scintilla" 198
James Weldon Johnson, "The Creation—A Negro Sermon" 199
Jean Toomer
"Georgia Dusk" 202
"Song of the Son" 203
Claude McKay
"If We Must Die" 203
"The Harlem Dancer" 204
"Spring in New Hampshire" 205
"The Lynching" 205
Jessie Fauset, "La Vie C'est La Vie" 206
Lewis Alexander, "The Dark Brother" 206
Frank Horne, "Nigger—A Chant for Children" . 207
Gwendolyn B. Bennett, "To a Dark Girl" . . . 208
Sterling A. Brown, "Long Gone" 209
Langston Hughes
"I, Too" 210
"Song for a Dark Girl" 211
"Mulatto" 211
"Weary Blues" 213

PAGE

SPIRITUALS

"Swing Low Sweet Chariot" 217
"Go Down Moses" 217
"All God's Chillun Got Wings" 218
"Dere's No Hidin' Place Down Dere" 219
"Deep River" 220

BLUES

"St. Louis Blues" 223
"Friendless Blues" 224
"Mountain Top Blues" 225
"The Blues I've Got" 226
"Loveless Love" 227

LABOR SONGS

"Work Song" 231
"Water Boy" 231
"Casey Jones" 232
"John Henry" 232
"Rain or Shine" 233

ESSAYS

Literary

Benjamin Brawley, "The Negro in American Fiction" 237
Alain Locke, "The Negro in American Culture" . 248
Clarence Cameron White, "Negro's Gift to American Music" 267

Historical

W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Freedmen's Bureau" . . 277
Arthur A. Schomburg, "The Negro Digs Up His Past" 299

Sociological

Charles S. Johnson, "The Negro Migration . . 309
Abram L. Harris, "The Negro and the New Economic Life" 324

PAGE

Charles Wesley, "Organized Labor and the Negro" 339
Kelly Miller, "The Disgrace of Democracy" . . . 363
E. Franklin Frazier, "La Bourgeoisie Noire" . . . 379
Walter White, "I Investigate Lynchings" . . . 389
George S. Schuyler, "Our Greatest Gift to America" 405
Carter G. Woodson, "Fifty Years of Negro Citizenship" 413
Thomas Dabney, "Dominant Forces in Race Relations" 436

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Frederick Douglass, "Autobiography," 447
Booker T. Washington, "Up from Slavery" . . . 471
James Weldon Johnson, "The Autobiography of an Ex-coloured Man" 497

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES 529

THE GROWTH OF NEGRO LITERATURE

By V. F. CALVERTON

NEGRO art and literature are, in many ways, as rich in ancient tradition as in modern challenge. The discoveries of archæologists, dating from the explorations of over a century ago, have disclosed the remnants of an African culture that hitherto was almost completely unknown. Tennyson's youthful apostrophe to Timbuctoo has a deeper meaning and import to-day. Timbuctoo stands now as but a single reminder of an ancient civilization that was, perhaps, as rare in diversity and as advanced in ways of life as any civilization, however adjacent or remote, of its time. The products of this civilization, or if we wish to include the civilizations of Ethiopia, Ghana, Melle, and the Songhay in separate categories, then of these civilizations are an eloquent testimony of their progress.

In the Songhay empire, for example, education was advanced to such a point that people came from all over the Islamic world to teach in its schools; and the savants of the Songhay were active also in the Mohammedan countries to the north and east. In fact, throughout the Sudan, university life was fairly extensive. Ahmed Baba, one of the strongly arresting figures of his period, stands out as a brilliant example of the sweep of Sudanese erudition. An author of more than forty books upon such diverse themes as theology, astronomy, ethnography and biography, Baba was a scholar of great depth and inspiration. With his expatriation from Timbuctoo—he was in the city at the time that it was invaded by the Moroccans in 1592 and protested against their occupation of it—he lost, in his collection of 1,600 books, one of the richest libraries of his day. Ahmed Baba, of course, although the most conspicuous, was only

one scholar among many. All through West Africa the Negroes had established many centers of learning. In their schools and universities, courses were given in rhetoric, logic, eloquence, diction, the principles of arithmetic, hygiene, medicine, prosody, philosophy, ethnography, music and astronomy.[1] The Negro scholars in many instances surpassed the Arabian. In Ethiopia their contributions to culture streamed far beyond the borders of their own nation in influence and power. Every exploration and excavation of African materials adds to this historical revelation. We see rising before us, in the form of obscure manuscript, relics of apparel, and architectural remains, the lives of peoples and the movements of civilizations once buried in the sands of a dead world. In this Negro ancestry there were discovered rulers who expanded their kingdoms into empires, generals who advanced the technique of military science, and scholars who brought with their wisdom an advancing vision of life.

When we realize, then, that the Negro is not without a cultural past, we can readily understand his achievements in American art and literature in terms of environmental evolution. Most Americans, unacquainted with this past, and unappreciative of the potentialities of the black peoples, interpret the developments in Negro literature in ways that are immediately stultifying and absurd. One way is tragically familiar. Negro advance, according to this way of interpretation, is the result of the white blood infused in the black personality. The advocates of this interpretation have gone to great pains in their endeavor to prove that every Negro genius is a product of white miscegenation. Their argument that it is only through the presence of white blood that black genius can derive, is no more logical than the contention that it was only through the presence of black blood that Pushkin could develop into a white genius. Nevertheless this method of interpretation still prevails, even in circles that often pretend to be scientific. But there

[1] *Negro Culture in West Africa,* by G. W. Ellis.

are other ways of interpretation that are scarcely less unfortunate in their logic—or lack of it. Another is the one that tries to treat the growth of the new Negro literature as a fad, which, in its sudden flair, reflects nothing more than an interest in the curious. The Negro, in the eyes of the critics, is an oddity, and as an artist and intellectual is stranger far than fiction. Their explanation of his recent success is based mainly upon what they consider an aspect of patronage on the part of the reading public and the publisher. His work is greeted from the point of view of race and not of art. He is pampered as a Negro, and his work is praised often when it ought to be attacked. As a consequence, they are convinced that in a few years, as this illusion in reference to his work has begun to vanish, the interest in Negro literature will cease, and the urge in favor of its creation will correspondingly disappear.

Upon close analysis, these interpretations are seen to be at once irrelevant and futile. In the first place, the Negro did advance and achieve in Africa before white blood could make its intrusion, and many Negro geniuses in America show very little trace of white blood at all; and, in the second place, his contributions to American art and literature are far more free of white influence than American culture is of English. Indeed, we may say that the contributions of the Negro to American culture are as indigenous to our soil as the legendary cowboy or gold-seeking frontiersman. And, in addition, it is no exaggeration whatsoever to contend that they are more striking and singular in substance and structure than any contributions that have been made by the white man to American culture. In fact, they constitute America's chief claim to originality in its cultural history. In song, the Negro spirituals and to a less extent the Blues; in tradition, Negro folk-lore; and in music, Negro jazz—these three constitute the Negro contribution to American culture. In fact, it can be said, that they constitute all that is unique in our cultural life. Since Indian remains have been very largely exterminated, Indian cul-

ture, with its native originality, has been mainly lost. At least, enough does not remain to challenge the contributions of the Negro. When Dvorák sought to find an inspiration in American environment for his New World Symphony, he inevitably turned to the Negro. After all, the Negro, in his simple, unsophisticated way, has developed out of the American *milieu* a form of expression, a mood, a literary *genre,* a folk-tradition, that are distinctly and undeniably American. This is more than the white man has done. The white man in America has continued, and in an inferior manner, a culture of European origin. He has not developed a culture that is definitely and unequivocally American. In respect of originality, then, the Negro is more important in the growth of an American culture than the white man. His art is richer, more spontaneous, and more captivating and convincing in its appeal.

The social background of Negro life in itself was sufficient to inspire an art of no ordinary character. Indeed, the very fact that the Negro, by the nature of his environment, was deprived of education, prevented his art from ever becoming purely imitative. Even where he adopted the white man's substance, as in the case of religion, he never adopted his forms. He gave to whatever he took a new style and a new interpretation. In truth, he made it practically into a new thing. There were no ancient conventions that he, in his untutored zeal, felt duty-bound to respect, and no age-old traditions that instructed him, perforce, as to what was art and what was not. He could express his soul, as it were, without concern for grammar or the eye of the carping critic. As a result, his art is, as is all art that springs from the people, an artless art, and in that sense is the most genuine art of the world. While the white man has gone to Europe for his models, and is seeking still an European approval of his artistic endeavors, the Negro in his art forms has never gone beyond America for his background and has never sought the acclaim of any culture other than his own. This is particularly true of those forms

of Negro art that come directly from the people. It is, of course, not so true of a poet such as Phyllis Wheatley or of the numerous Negro poets and artists of to-day, who in more ways than one have followed the traditions of their white contemporaries rather than extended and perfected the original art forms of their race. Of course, in the eighteenth century when Phyllis Wheatley wrote, these Negro art forms were scarcely more than embryonic. To-day, on the other hand, their existence has become a commonplace to the white writer as well as the black.

In a subtle way, Negro art and literature in America have had an economic origin. All that is original in Negro folk-lore, or singular in Negro spirituals and Blues, can be traced to the economic institution of slavery and its influence upon the Negro soul. The Negro lived in America as a slave for over two hundred and forty years. He was forced by the system of slavery into habits of life and forms of behavior that inevitably drove him in the direction of emotional escape and religious delirium. Existence offered him nothing to hope for but endless labor and pain. Life was a continuous crucifixion. The earth became a place of evil. As a downtrodden and suppressed race he had nothing to discover within himself that insured emancipation or escape. His revolts had all proved ineffectual. Inevitably he turned toward the white man for the materials of his "under-dog" logic. He accepted and absorbed the ideas of the ruling class, as do most subordinate groups and classes, until they became a part of his reaction. The white man's paradise suddenly became a consuming aspiration. He became enamored of it as a holy vision. His belief in it became a ferocious faith. Its other-worldly aspect only lent it a richer enchantment. There were no realistic categories to thwart or limit its undimensioned beauty and magnificence. The scarcities of this world had no meaning in the infinite plenitude of the next. Gold could be had for the asking, and everything was as dream would have it if in a land beyond the sun.

It was as an expression of this consecrated other-worldly ardor that the Negro spirituals came into being and grew into form. There is more, far more, than the ordinary Christian zeal embodied in them. These spirituals are not mere religious hymns written or recited to sweeten the service or improve the ritual. They are the aching, poignant cry of an entire people. Jesus to the Negro is no simple religious saviour, worshiped on Sundays and forgotten during the week. He is the incarnation of the suffering soul of a race. In such a spiritual as *Crucifixion,* one finds this spirit manifest:

They crucified my Lord,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
They crucified my Lord,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
Not a word, not a word, not a word.

They nailed Him to the tree,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
They nailed Him to the tree,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
Not a word, not a word, not a word.

They pierced Him in the side,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
They pierced Him in the side,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
Not a word, not a word, not a word.

The blood came twinklin' down,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
The blood came twinklin' down,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
Not a word, not a word, not a word.

He bowed His head an' died,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
He bowed His head an' died,
an' He never said a mumbalin' word;
Not a word, not a word, not a word.

Or in such a spiritual as *Swing Low Sweet Chariot,* we discover the other-worldly motif in fine, moving form:

Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
O swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

I looked over Jordan, and what
did I see,
Comin' for to carry me home,
A band of angels comin' after me,
Comin' for to carry me home;
If you get-a dere befo' I do,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Tell all my friends I'm comin' too,
Comin' for to carry me home.

O swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Comin' for to carry me home.

When we turn to the Blues and the Labor Songs, the economic connection is more obvious. Here we have folklore in poetic form, springing spontaneously from the simple everyday life of an oppressed people. The Blues have a primitive kinship with the old ballads that is strikingly curious upon close comparison. While the rhyme-scheme employed in the Blues is often less clever and arresting than that found in the ballads, the incremental repetitions are not less effective, and the simple, quick descriptions are often as fine in this form as the other. The labor songs, growing up as part of the workaday rhythms of daily toil, have a swing about them that is irresistibly

infectious. The musical swing of the hammer, its sweeping rise and fall, is communicated, for instance with rhythmic power in the song entitled *John Henry*.

> Dis is de hammer
> Killed John Henry,
> Killed him dead, killed him dead,
> Busted de brains all outer my pardner
> In his head, yes, in his head.

And in the familiar levee song, we meet with another but not less enticing rhythm.

> Where wuz your sweet mamma
> When de boat went down?
> On de deck, Babe,
> Hollerin' Alabama Bound.

The Negro has retained unquestionably in his art a certain primitivism that is wonderfully refreshing in contrast to the stilted affectations of the more cultured styles and conceptions. We come closer to life with these primitivisms, feel beauty in its more genuine and intimate and less artificial and cerebral forms.

These primitivisms of the Negro are a singular evolution of our American environment. In describing them as primitive, we do not mean that they are savage in origin, or that the instincts of savagery linger in them, but that they are untutored in form and unsophisticated in content, and in these aspects are more primitive than civilized in character. The art of primitive peoples is often the very opposite in spirit to that of the American Negro. The art, for instance, of the African Negro is entirely without that exuberance which is so emphatically dominant in the art-expression of the American Negro. African art is rigid, economical of energy, and almost classic in its discipline. The exuberance of sentiment, the spirited denial of discipline, and the contempt for the conventional, that are so conspicuous in the

art of the American Negro, are direct outgrowths of the nature of his life in this country.

In jazz this vital and overwhelming exuberance of the American Negro reaches its apex in physical dynamics. If the origin of jazz is not entirely Negroid—that its fundamental form is derivative of Negro rhythms no longer can be disputed—its development of attitude and expression in America has certainly been chiefly advanced by the Negro. While the spirituals represent the religious escape of the Negro, the jazz rhythms vivify his mundane abandon. Today this mundane abandon has become a universal craving on the part of youth in Europe as well as in America. Since the war, the dance has become a mania. It is the mad, delirious dance of men and women who have had to seize upon something as a vicarious outlet for their crazed emotions. They have not wanted old opiates that induced sleep and the delusion of a sweet stillness of things and silence. They have not sought the escape which an artificial lassitude brings to minds tormented with worry and pain. They have demanded an escape that is active, dynamic, electrical, an escape that exhilarates, and brings restfulness only from exhaustion. Jazz has provided that escape in increasing measure as its jubilant antics and rhythms have become madder and madder in their tumult of release. To the Negro the riotous rhythms that constitute jazz are but an active translation of the impulsive extravagance of his life. Whether a difference in the calcium factor in bone structure or conjunction, accounting for an exceptional muscular resiliency, or a difference in terms of an entirely environmental disparity, be used to explain the Negro's superior response to jazz, his supremacy in this new departure in music remains uncontested. Jazz, Stokowski contends, "has effected a profound change in musical outlook." In this change, Stokowski adds:

"The Negro musicians of America are playing a great part. . . . They have an open mind, and unbiased outlook. They

are causing new blood to flow in the veins of music. The jazz players make their instruments do entirely new things, things finished musicians are taught to avoid. They are path-finders into new realms."

Jazz reflects something of the essential irresponsibility, or rather the irresponsible enthusiasms and ecstasies, that underlie Negro life here in America, and which give to Negro art such singular distraction in verse and spontaneity. While Jazz in its inferior forms is a vulgar removal from the idea of the exquisite which prevailed in music before our day, it nevertheless has the virtue of great originality and the vigor of deep challenge. In a very significant sense, indeed, it remains as the only original contribution to music that has been made by America.

If the spirit of jazz is captured almost to a point of precision in these lines from *Runnin' Wild*:

> Runnin' wild; lost control
> Runnin' wild, mighty bold,
> Feelin' gay and reckless too
> Carefree all the time; never blue
> Always goin' I don't know where
> Always showin' that I don't care
> Don' love nobody, it ain't worth while
> All alone; runnin' wild.

it would be a serious and most reprehensible exaggeration to maintain that it is this mood which permeates all Negro art in America. In fact, much of contemporary Negro poetry is as far removed in spirit from the jazz motif as the poetry of John Milton is from that of T. S. Eliot. There is indeed, an over-seriousness, even an affected dignity in the work of many Negro poets. This tendency to an artificial loftiness of utterance, verging often upon the pompous, is more marked in the work of the Negro writers of the nineteenth century than of the twentieth. In many cases education removed the Negro writer further from his people, and inclined his work in the direction of imitating

the artificial standards of other groups rather than of advancing and perfecting those of his own. As a result, a certain naturalness and fine vigor of style were lost. While this tendency has not disappeared, a reaction has already set in against it, and to-day Negro writers have begun to develop a more candid approach.

In the poetry of Langston Hughes, for instance, there is a freshness even in artifice that was absent in the poetry of the nineteenth century Negro. Even Dunbar, who was the leading Negro poet prior to our own day, avoided the affectations and conceits of his contemporaries only in his poems of dialect. In the verse of such writers as Albert A. Whitman, Mrs. Harper, George Moses Horton, James Madison Bell, Joseph Seamon Cotter and James David Corrothers this literary fallacy is unpleasantly conspicuous. They aspired at the stately, when they should have aimed at the simple. Their poetry, as a consequence, was hopelessly inept and sentimental. It is only with the present day, and the emergence of the contemporary school of Negro poets, led by such figures as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer and Claude McKay, that this type of verse has been condemned with scorn.

If the recent developments in Negro literature cannot be characterized as a renaissance, they certainly must be noted as marking off a new stage in the literary history of a people. Without question the work of Jean Toomer, Rudolph Fisher, Burghardt Du Bois, and Walter White in fiction; Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen and Claude McKay in verse; and Alain Locke, Franklin Frazier, James Weldon Johnson, Charles S. Johnson, Abram L. Harris and George Schuyler in the essay, has been distinguished by fine intelligence and advancing artistic vision. Surely at no other period, and certainly never in so short a time, have so many Negro writers of genuine talent appeared. If among these writers, no great artist or great thinker has so far evolved, there is no reason for despair. The great achievement of Roland Hayes on the concert stage, and of

Paul Robeson in the theatre, gives promise at least of similar success in the literary art in the future. The appearance of these numerous artists and the growth of this newer spirit on the part of the Negro, is really not so much a rebirth in the sense of a renaissance, as it is the hastening of an old birth which had formerly been retarded in its growth and evolution.

Steadily the trend in this New Negro literature has developed in favor of the vigorous instead of the exquisite. Challenge has become more significant than charm. The submissive acquiescences of the Booker T. Washington attitude and era have now become contemptuously anachronistic. The sentimental cry of a nineteenth century poet such as Corrothers:

> To be a Negro in a day like this—
> Alas! Lord God, what will have we done

has been superseded by the charging defiance of a twentieth century poet such as McKay:

IF WE MUST DIE

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.

If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but—fighting back!

—CLAUDE MCKAY

The admission of inferiority which was implicit in so much of the earlier verse, the supplicatory note which ran like a lugubrious echo through so many of its stanzas, has been supplanted by an attitude of superiority and independence on the part of such poets as Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn Bennett.

In Cullen's lines:

> My love is dark as yours is fair,
> Yet lovelier I hold her
> Than listless maids with pallid hair,
> And blood that's thin and colder . . .

one discovers this attitude expressed with exquisite conviction. In Gwendolyn Bennett's stanza:

> I love you for your brownness
> And the rounded darkness of your breast;
> I love you for the breaking sadness in your voice
> And shadows where your wayward eye-lids rest . . .

we are confronted with it again in definite form. Hughes gives to this same attitude a touch of African aspiration:

> We should have a land of trees,
> Bowed down with chattering parrots
> Brilliant as the day,
> And not this land where birds are grey . . .

and in *America* he whips it into a prophetic challenge:

> I, Too
>
> I, too, sing America.
> I am the darker brother.
> They send me to eat in the kitchen
> When company comes.
> But I laugh
> And eat well
> And grow strong.
> Tomorrow

I'll sit at the table
When company comes,
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
'Eat in the kitchen'
Then.
Besides, they'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed,—
I, too, am America.

George Schuyler in prose has given this same attitude a sharp, ironic turn. His clean-cut, biting style, inevitably in keeping with his theme and purpose, is at times superb. He meets his materials with a directness that compels by its vigor. His writing is never sentimental; rather it has a hard, metallic brilliance that convinces without endeavoring to caress. In *Our Greatest Gift to America,* which deals in satiric form with the Negro's position in this country, Schuyler's criticism is acute and devastating:

"It is fairly well established, I think, that our presence in the Great Republic has been of incalculable psychological value to the masses of which we are citizens. Descendants of convicts, serfs, and half-wits, with the rest have been buoyed up and greatly exalted by being constantly assured of their superiority to all other races and their equality with each other. On the stages of a thousand music-halls, they have their vanity tickled by black-face performers parading the idiocies of mythical black roustabouts and rustics. Between belly-cracking guffaws they have secretly congratulated themselves on the fact that they are not like these buffoons. Their books and magazines have told them, or insinuated, that morality, beauty, refinement and culture are restricted to Caucasians. On every hand they have seen smokes endeavoring to change from black to white, and from kinky hair to straight, by means of deleterious chemicals, and constantly they hear the Negroes urging each other to do this and that like white folks. Nor do the crackers fail to observe either—that pink epidermis is as highly treasured among blacks as in Nordic America, and that the most devastating charge that one Negro can make against another is that 'he acts just

like a nigger.' Anything excellent they hear labeled by the race-conscious Negroes as 'like white folks,' nor is it unusual for them while loitering in the Negro ghetto, to hear black women compared to Fords, mulatto women to Cadillacs and white women to Packards. With so much flattery it is no wonder that the Caucasians have a very high opinion of themselves and attempt to live up to the lofty niche in which the Negroes have placed them. We should not marvel that every white elevator operator, school teacher and bricklayer identifies himself with Shakespeare, Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, Newton, Edison, Wagner, Tennyson and Rembrandt as creators of this great civilization. As a result we have our American society, where everybody who sports a pink color believes himself to be the equal of all other whites by virtue of his lack of skin pigmentation, and his classic Caucasian features.

"It is not surprising, then, that democracy has worked better in this country than elsewhere. This belief in the equality of all white folks—making skin color the gauge of worth and the measure of citizenship rights—has caused the lowest to strive to become amongst the highest. Because of this great ferment, America has become the Utopia of the material world; the land of hope and opportunity. Without the transplanted African in their midst to bolster up the illusion, America would have unquestionably been a much different place; but instead the shine has served as a mudsill upon which all white people alike can stand and reach toward the stars. I submit that here is the gift par excellence of the Negro to America. To spur ten times our number on to great heights of achievement; to spare the nation the enervating presence of a destructive social caste system, such as exists elsewhere, by substituting a color caste system that roused the hope and pride of teeming millions of ofays—this indeed is a gift of which we can well be proud."

As the racialism of the Negro has become more assertive and radical, a new attitude has begun to reveal itself in his fiction. There has been a marked tendency in the past, except in stories of dialect, for Negro writers to center their attention upon the more enlightened and prosperous members of the race. In *Fire in the Flint,* for instance, Walter White has chosen a doctor for his protagonist; in *There is*

Confusion, Jessie Fauset has featured a dancer as her star; in *Quicksand,* Nella Larsen has selected a school teacher for her main character; and in *The Dark Princess* Du Bois has made an aristocratic woman into his heroine. To-day in the novels of Rudolph Fisher and Claude McKay the class of characters has shifted. In *The Walls of Jericho* and *Home to Harlem* the main characters are proletarian types, piano-movers and stevedores, who are endowed with little education and less culture. The lives of these lower types are seen to be as fascinating and dramatic as those of the upper. In fact, a certain native drama is revealed in the lives of these colored folk that is absent in the lives of most white people in the same class of society. This added drama flows from the freer and more irresponsibly spontaneous way in which these black men live. In time no doubt these proletarian types, since the Negro, dating from his vast migrations from southern to northern latitudes during and immediately following the war, is becoming rapidly proletarianized, will occupy an increasingly large part in the entire literary scene.

This new challenge on the part of the contemporary Negro was first expressed in 1912 by W. Burghardt Du Bois in his famous Atlanta speech, which was dynamitic in its various provocations. This speech in its statement of purpose chalked off the beginning of a new era in the intellectual life of the American Negro:

"We plan an organization so effective and so powerful that when discrimination and injustice touched one Negro, it would touch 12,000,000. We have not got this yet, but we have taken a great step toward it. We have dreamed, too, of an organization that would work ceaselessly to make Americans know that the so-called 'Negro-Problem' is simply one phase of the vaster problem of democracy in America, and that those who wish freedom and justice for their country must wish it for every black citizen. This is the great and insistent message of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People."

This meant that the Booker T. Washington philosophy, which had prevailed for over a generation, had been at last criticized and condemned. The intellectual acquiescence which Washington had encouraged and endorsed was supplanted by a doctrine of resistance. The American Negro henceforth, through the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations, would fight rather than surrender. The World War, of course, was enormously instrumental in strengthening this change of attitude on the part of the Negro.

This change in intellectual conviction, this shifting from an attitude of compromise to one of challenge, is reflected, as we have seen, in the literature of the Negro during the recent decade.

If this new literature of the Negro in America does not constitute a renaissance, it does signify rapid growth in racial art and culture. It is a growth that is as yet unfinished. Indeed, we may say it illustrates a growth that in a dynamic sense has just begun. It indicates more than the rise of a literature. It marks the rise of an entire people.

FICTION

Short Story

FERN

By JEAN TOOMER

Face flowed into her eyes. Flowed in soft cream foam and plaintive ripples, in such a way that wherever your glance may momentarily have rested, it immediately thereafter wavered in the direction of her eyes. The soft suggestion of down slightly darkened, as the shadow of a bird's wing might, the creamy brown color of her upper lip. Why, after noticing it, you sought her eyes, I cannot tell you. Her nose was aquiline, Semitic. If you have heard a Jewish cantor sing, if he has touched you and made your own sorrow seem trivial when compared with his, you will know my feeling when I follow the curves of her profile, like mobile rivers, to their common delta. They were strange eyes. In this, that they sought nothing—that is, nothing that was obvious and tangible and that one could see, and they gave the impression that nothing was to be denied. When a woman seeks, you will have observed, her eyes deny. Fern's eyes desired nothing that you could give her; there was no reason why they should withhold. Men saw her eyes and fooled themselves. Fern's eyes said to them that she was easy. When she was young, a few men took her, but got no joy from it. And then, once done, they felt bound to her (quite unlike their hit and run with other girls), felt as though it would take them a lifetime to fulfill an obligation which they could find no name for. They became attached to her, and hungered after finding the barest trace of what she might desire. As she grew up, new men who came to town felt as almost everyone did who ever saw her: that they would not be denied. Men were everlastingly bringing her their bodies. Something inside of her got tired of them, I guess, for I am certain that for the life of her

she could not tell why or how she began to turn them off. They began to leave her, baffled and ashamed, yet vowing to themselves that some day they would do a fine thing for her: send her candy every week and not let her know whom it came from, watch out for her wedding day and give her a magnificent something with no name on it, buy a house and deed it to her, rescue her from some unworthy fellow who had tricked her into marrying him. As you know, men are apt to idolize or fear that which they cannot understand, especially if it be a woman. She did not deny them, yet the fact was that they were denied. A sort of superstition crept into their consciousness of her being somehow above them. Being above them meant that she was not to be approached by anyone. She became a virgin. Now a virgin in a small southern town is by no means the usual thing, if you will believe me. That the sexes were made to mate is the practice of the South. Particularly, black folks were made to mate. And it is black folks whom I have been talking about thus far. What white men thought of Fern I can arrive at only by analogy. They let her alone.

Anyone, of course, could see her, could see her eyes. If you walked up Dixie Pike most any time of day, you'd be most like to see her resting listless-like on the railing of her porch, back propped against a post, head tilted a little forward because there was a nail in the porch post just where her head came which for some reason or other she never took the trouble to pull out. Her eyes, if it were sunset, rested idly where the sun, molten and glorious, was pouring down between the fringe of pines. Or maybe they gazed at the gray cabin on the knoll from which an evening folk-song was coming. Perhaps they followed a cow that had been turned loose to roam and feed on cotton stalks and corn leaves. Like as not they'd settle on some vague spot above the horizon, though hardly a trace of wistfulness would come to them. If it were dusk, then they'd wait for

the search-light of the evening train which you could see miles up the track before it flared across the Dixie Pike, close to her home. Wherever they looked, you'd follow them and then waver back. Like her face, the whole countryside seemed to flow into her eyes. Flowed into them with the soft listless cadence of Georgia's south. A young Negro, once, was looking at her, spellbound, from the road. A white man passing in a buggy had to flick him with his whip if he was to get by without running him over. I first saw her on the porch. I was passing with a fellow whose crusty numbness (I was from the North and suspected of being prejudiced and stuck-up) was melting as he found me warm. I asked him who she was. "That's Fern," was all that I could get from him. Some folks already thought that I was given to nosing around; I let it go at that, so far as questions were concerned. But at first sight of her I felt as if I heard a Jewish cantor sing. As if his singing rose above the unheard chorus of a folk-song. And I felt bound to her. I too had my dreams: something I would do for her. I have knocked about from town to town too much not to know the futility of mere change of place. Besides, picture if you can, this cream-colored solitary girl sitting at a tenement window looking down on the indifferent throngs of Harlem. Better that she listen to folk-songs at dusk in Georgia, you would say, and so would I. Or, suppose she came up North and married. Even a doctor or a lawyer, say, one who would be sure to get along—that is, make money. You and I know, who have had experience in such things, that love is not a thing like prejudice which can be bettered by changes of town. Could men in Washington, Chicago, or New York, more than the men of Georgia, bring her something left vacant by the bestowal of their bodies? You and I who know men in these cities will have to say, they could not. See her out and out a prostitute along State Street in Chicago. See her move into a Southern town where white men are more aggressive. See her become a white man's concubine. . . . Something

I must do for her. There was myself. What could I do for her? Talk, of course. Push back the fringe of pines upon new horizons. To what purpose? and what for? Her? Myself? Men in her case seem to lose selfishness. I lost mine before I touched her. I ask you, friend (it makes no difference if you sit in the Pullman or the Jim Crow as the train crosses her road), what thoughts would come to you—that is, after you'd finished with the thoughts that leap into men's minds at the sight of a pretty woman who will not deny them; what thoughts would come to you, had you seen her in a quick flash, keen and intuitively, as she sat there on her porch when your train thundered by? Would you have got off at the next station and come back for her to take her where? Would you have completely forgotten her as soon as you reached Macon, Atlanta, Augusta, Pasadena, Madison, Chicago, Boston, or New Orleans? Would you tell your wife or sweetheart about a girl you saw? Your thoughts can help me, and I would like to know. Something I would do for her. . . .

One evening I walked up the Pike on purpose, and stopped to say hello. Some of her family were about, but they moved away to make room for me. Damn if I knew how to begin. Would you? Mr. and Miss So-and-So, people, the weather, the crops, the new preacher, the frolic, the church benefit, rabbit and possum hunting, the new soft drink they had at old Pap's store, the schedule of the trains, what kind of town Macon was, Negro's migration north, boll-weevils, syrup, the Bible—to all these things she gave a yassur or nassur, without further comment. I began to wonder if perhaps my own emotional sensibility had played one of its tricks on me. "Let's take a walk," I at last ventured. The suggestion, coming after so long an isolation, was novel enough, I guess, to surprise. But it wasn't that. Something told me that men before me had said just that as a prelude to the offering of their bodies. I tried to tell her with my eyes. I think she understood. The thing from

her that made my throat catch, vanished. Its passing left her visible in a way I'd thought, but never seen. We walked down the Pike with people on all the porches gaping at us. "Doesn't it make you mad?" She meant the row of petty gossiping people. She meant the world. Through a canebrake that was ripe for cutting, the branch was reached. Under a sweet-gum tree, and where reddish leaves had dammed the creek a little, we sat down. Dusk, suggesting the almost imperceptible procession of giant trees, settled with a purple haze about the cane. I felt strange, as I always do in Georgia, particularly at dusk. I felt that things unseen to men were tangibly immediate. It would not have surprised me had I had a vision. People have them in Georgia more often than you would suppose. A black woman once saw the mother of Christ and drew her in charcoal on the court-house wall. . . . When one is on the soil of one's ancestors, most anything can come to one. . . . From force of habit, I suppose, I held Fern in my arms, that is, without at first noticing it. Then my mind came back to her. Her eyes, unusually weird and open, held me. Held God. He flowed in as I've seen the countryside flow in. Seen men. I must have done something—what, I don't know, in the confusion of my emotion. She sprang up. Rushed some distance from me. Fell to her knees, and began swaying, swaying. Her body was tortured with something it could not let out. Like boiling sap it flooded arms and fingers till she shook them as if they burned her. It found her throat, and spattered inarticulately in plaintive, convulsive sounds, mingled with calls to Christ Jesus. And then she sang, brokenly. A Jewish cantor singing with a broken voice. A child's voice, uncertain, or an old man's. Dusk hid her; I could hear only her song. It seemed to me as though she were pounding her head in anguish upon the ground. I rushed to her. She fainted in my arms.

There was talk about her fainting with me in the canefield. And I got one or two ugly looks from town men

who'd set themselves up to protect her. In fact, there was talk of making me leave town. But they never did. They kept a watch-out for me, though. Shortly after, I came back North. From the train window I saw her as I crossed her road. Saw her on her porch, head tilted a little forward where the nail was, eyes focused on the sunset. Saw her face flow into them, the countryside, and something that I call God, flowing into them. . . . Nothing ever really happened. Nothing ever came to Fern, not even I. Something I would do for her. Some fine unnamed thing. . . . And, friend, you? She is still living, I have reason to know. Her name, against the chance that you might happen down that way, is Fernie May Rosen.

THE GOOPHERED GRAPEVINE

From *The Conjure Woman*

By CHARLES WADDELL CHESNUTT

We alighted from the buggy, walked about the yard for a while, and then wandered off into the adjoining vineyard. Upon Annie's complaining of weariness I led the way back to the yard, where a pine log, lying under the spreading elm, afforded a shady though somewhat hard seat. One end of the log was already occupied by a venerable looking colored man. He held on his knees a hat full of grapes, over which he was smacking his lips with great gusto, and a pile of grapeskins near him indicated that the performance was no new thing. We approached him at an angle from the rear, and were close to him before he perceived us. He respectfully rose as we drew near, and was moving away, when I begged him to keep his seat.

"Don't let us disturb you," I said. "There is plenty of room for us all."

He resumed his seat with some embarrassment. While he had been standing, I had observed that he was a tall man, and, though slightly bowed by the weight of years, apparently quite vigorous. He was not entirely black, and this fact, together with the quality of his hair, which was about six inches long and very bushy, except on the top of his head, where he was quite bald, suggested a slight strain of other than negro blood. There was a shrewdness in his eyes, too, which was not altogether African, and which, as we afterwards learned from experience, was indicative of a corresponding shrewdness in his character. He went on eating his grapes, but did not seem to enjoy

himself quite so well as he had apparently done before he became aware of our presence.

"Do you live around here?" I asked, anxious to put him at his ease.

"Yas, suh. I lives des ober yander, behine de nex' san'-hill, on de Lumberton plank-road."

"Do you know anything about the time when this vineyard was cultivated?"

"Lawd bless you, suh, I knows all about it. Dey ain' na'er a man in dis settlement w'at won' tell you ole Julius McAdoo 'uz bawn en raise' on dis yer same plantation. Is you de Norv'n gemman w'at's gwine ter buy de ole vimya'd?"

"I am looking at it," I replied; "but I don't know that I shall care to buy unless I can be reasonably sure of making something out of it."

"Well, suh, you is a stranger ter me, en I is a stranger to you, en we is bofe strangers ter one anudder, but 'f I 'uz in yo' place, I wouldn't buy dis vimya'd."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well, I dunno whe'r you b'lieves in conj'in' er not,—some er de w'ite folks don't, er says dey don't,—but de truf er de matter is dat dis yer ole vimya'd is goophered."

"Is what?" I asked, not grasping the meaning of this unfamiliar word.

"Is goophered—conju'd, bewitch'."

He imparted this information with such solemn earnestness, and with such an air of confidential mystery, that I felt somewhat interested, while Annie was evidently much impressed, and drew closer to me.

"How do you know it is bewitched?" I asked.

"I wouldn' spec' fer you ter b'lieve me 'less you know all 'bout de fac's. But ef you en young miss dere doan' min' lis'nin' ter a ole nigger run on a minute er two w'ile you er restin', I kin 'spain to you how it all happen'."

We assured him that we would be glad to hear how it all happened, and he began to tell us. At first the current of his memory—or imagination—seemed somewhat slug-

gish; but as his embarrassment wore off, his language flowed more freely, and the story acquired perspective and coherence. As he became more and more absorbed in the narrative, his eyes assumed a dreamy expression, and he seemed to lose sight of his auditors, and to be living over again in monologue his life on the old plantation.

"Ole Mars Dugal' McAdoo," he began, "bought dis place long many years befo' de wah, en I 'member well w'en he sot out all dis yer part er de plantation in scuppernon's. De vimes growed monst'us fas', en Mars Dugal' made a thousan' gallon er scuppernon' wine eve'y year.

"Now, ef dey's an'thing a nigger lub, nex' ter 'possum, en chick'n, en watermillyums, it's scuppernon's. Dey ain' nuffin dat kin stan' up side'n de scuppernon' fer sweetness; sugar ain't a suckumstance ter scuppernon'. W'en de season is nigh 'bout ober, en de grapes begin ter swivel up des a little wid de wrinkles er ole age,—w'en de skin git sof' en brown,—den de scuppernon' make you smack yo' lip en roll yo' eye en wush fer mo'; so I reckon it ain' very 'stonishin' dat niggers lub scuppernon'.

"Dey wuz a sight er niggers in de naberhood er de vimya'd. Dere wuz ole Mars Henry Brayboy's niggers, en ole Mars Jeems McLean's niggers, en Mars Dugal's own niggers; den dey wuz a settlement er free niggers en po' buckrahs down by de Wim'l'ton Road, en Mars Dugal' had de only vimya'd in de naberhood. I reckon it ain' so much so nowadays, but befo' de wah, in slab'ry times, a nigger didn' mine goin' fi' er ten mile in a night, w'en dey wuz sump'n good ter eat at de yuther een'.

"So atter a w'ile Mars Dugal' begin ter miss his scuppernon's. Co'se he 'cuse' de niggers er it, but dey all 'nied it ter de las'. Mars Dugal' sot spring guns en steel traps, en he en de oberseah sot up nights once't or twice't, tel one night Mars Dugal'—he 'uz a monst'us keerless man—got his leg shot full er cow-peas. But somehow er nudder dey couldn' nebber ketch none er de niggers. I dunner how

it happen, but it happen des like I tell you, en de grapes kep' on a-goin' des de same.

"But bimeby ole Mars Dugal' fix' up a plan ter stop it. Dey wuz a cunjuh 'oman livin' down 'mongs' de free niggers on de Wim'l'ton Road, en all de darkies fum Rockfish ter Beaver Crick wuz feared er her. She could wuk de mos' powerfulles' kin' er goopher,—could make people hab fits, er rheumatiz', er make 'em des dwinel away en die; en dey say she went out ridin' de niggers at night, fer she wuz a witch 'sides bein' a cunjuh 'oman. Mars Dugal' hearn 'bout Aun' Peggy's doin's, en begun ter 'flect whe'r er no he couldn' git her ter he'p him keep de niggers off'n de grapevimes. One day in de spring er de year, ole miss pack' up a basket er chick'n en poun'cake, en a bottle er scuppernon' wine, en Mars Dugal' tuk it in his buggy en driv ober ter Aun' Peggy's cabin. He tuk de basket in, en had a long talk wid Aun' Peggy.

"De nex' day Aun' Peggy come up ter de vimya'd. De niggers seed her slippin' 'round, en dey soon foun' out what she 'uz doin' dere. Mars Dugal' had hi'ed her ter goopher de grapevimes. She sa'ntered 'roun' 'mongs' de vimes, en tuk a leaf fum dis one, en a grape-hull fum dat one, en den a little twig fum here, en a little pinch er dirt fum dere,—en put it all in a big black bottle, wid a snake's toof en a speckle hen's gall en some ha'rs fum a black cat's tail, en den fill' de bottle wid scuppernon' wine. W'en she got de goopher all ready en fix', she tuk 'n went out in de woods en buried it under de root uv a red oak tree, en den come back en tole one er de niggers she done goopher de grapevimes, en a'er a nigger w'at eat dem grapes 'ud be sho ter die inside'n twel' mont's.

"Atter dat de niggers let de scuppernon's 'lone, en Mars Dugal' didn' hab no 'casion ter fine no mo' fault; en de season wuz mos' gone, w'en a strange gemman stop at de plantation one night ter see Mars Dugal' on some business; en his coachman, seein' de scuppernon's growin' so nice en sweet, slip 'roun' behine de smoke-house, en et all de scup-

pernon's he could hole. Nobody didn' notice it at de time, but dat night, on de way home, de gemman's hoss runned away en kill' de coachman. W'en we hearn de noos, Aun' Lucy, de cook, she up'n say she seed de strange nigger eat'n' er de scuppernon's behine de smoke-house; en den we knowed de goopher had be'en er wukkin'. Den one er de nigger chilluns runned away fum de quarters one day, en got in de scuppernon's, en died de nex' week. White folks say he die' er de fevuh, but de niggers knowed it wuz de goopher. So you k'n be sho de darkies didn' hab much ter do wid dem scuppernon' vimes.

"W'en de scuppernon' season 'uz ober fer dat year, Mars Dugal' foun' he had made fifteen hund'ed gallon er wine; en one er de niggers hearn him laffin' wid de oberseah fit ter kill, en sayin' dem fifteen hund'ed gallon er wine wuz monst'us good intrus' on de ten dollars he laid out on de vimya'd. So I 'low ez he paid Aun' Peggy ten dollars fer to goopher de grapevimes.

"De goopher didn' wuk no mo' tel de nex' summer, w'en 'long to'ds de middle er de season one er de fiel' han's died; en ez dat lef' Mars Dugal' sho't er han's, he went off ter town fer ter buy anudder. He fotch de noo nigger home wid 'im. He wuz er ole nigger, er de color er a gingy-cake, en ball ez a hossapple on de top er his head. He wuz a peart ole nigger, do', en could do a big day's wuk.

"Now it happen dat one er de niggers on de nex' plantation, one er ole Mars Henry Brayboy's niggers, had runned away de day befo', en tuk ter de swamp, en ole Mars Dugal' en some er de yuther nabor w'ite folks had gone out wid dere guns en dere dogs fer ter he'p 'em hunt fer de nigger; en de han's on our own plantation wuz all so flusterated dat we fuhgot ter tell de noo han' 'bout de goopher on de scuppernon' vimes. Co'se he smell de grapes en see de vimes, an atter dahk de fus' thing he done wuz ter slip off ter de grapevimes 'dout sayin' nuffin ter nobody. Nex' mawnin' he tole some er de niggers 'bout de fine bait er scuppernon' he et de night befo'.

"W'en dey tole 'im 'bout de goopher on de grapevimes, he 'uz dat tarrified dat he turn pale, en look des like he gwine ter die right in his tracks. De oberseah come up en axed w'at 'uz de matter; en w'en dey tole 'im Henry been eatin' er de scuppernon's, en got de goopher on 'im, he gin Henry a big drink er w'iskey, en 'low dat de nex' rainy day he take 'im ober ter Aun' Peggy's, en see ef she wouldn' take de goopher off'n him, seein' ez he didn' know nuffin' erbout it tel he done et de grapes.

"Sho nuff, it rain de nex' day, en de oberseah went ober ter Aun' Peggy's wid Henry. En Aun' Peggy say dat bein' ez Henry didn' know 'bout de goopher, en et de grapes in ign'ance er de conseq'ences, she reckon she mought be able fer ter take de goopher off'n him. So she fotch out er bottle wid some cunjuh medicine in it, en po'd some out in a go'd fer Henry ter drink. He manage ter git it down; he say it tas'e like w'iskey wid sump'n bitter in it. She 'lowed dat 'ud keep de goopher off'n him tel de spring; but w'en de sap begin ter rise in de grapevimes he ha' ter come en see her ag'in, en she tell him w'at e's ter do.

"Nex' spring, w'en de sap commence' ter rise in de scuppernon' vime, Henry tuk a ham one night. Whar'd he git de ham? *I* doan know; dey wa'n't no hams on de plantation 'cep'n' w'at 'uz in de smoke-house, but *I* never see Henry 'bout de smoke-house. But ez I wuz a-sayin', he tuk de ham ober ter Aun' Peggy's; en Aun' Peggy tole 'im dat w'en Mars Dugal' begin ter prune de grapevimes, he must go en take 'n scrape off de sap whar it ooze out'n de cut een's er de vimes, en 'n'int his ball head wid it; en ef he do dat once't a year de goopher wouldn' wuk agin 'im long ez he done it. En bein' ez he fotch her de ham, she fix' it so he kin eat all de scuppernon' he want.

"So Henry 'n'int his head wid de sap out'n de big grapevime des ha'f way 'twix de quarters en de big house, en de goopher nebber wuk agin him dat summer. But de beat-enes' thing you eber see happen ter Henry. Up ter dat time he wuz ez ball ez a sweeten' 'tater, but des ez soon

ez de young leaves begun ter come out on de grapevimes, de ha'r begun ter grow out on Henry's head, en by de middle er de summer he had de bigges' head er ha'r on de plantation. Befo' dat, Henry had tol'able good ha'r 'roun' de aidges, but soon ez de young grapes begun ter come, Henry's ha'r begun to quirl all up in little balls, des like dis yer reg'lar grapy ha'r, en by de time de grapes got ripe his head look des like a bunch er grapes. Combin' it didn't do no good; he wuk at it ha'f de night wid er Jim Crow, en think he git it straighten' out, but in de mawnin' de grapes 'ud be dere des de same. So he gin it up, en tried ter keep de grapes down by havin' his ha'r cut sho't.

"But dat wa'n't de quares' thing 'bout de goopher. When Henry come ter de plantation, he wuz gittin' a little ole and stiff in de j'ints. But dat summer he got des ez spry en libely ez any young nigger on de plantation; fac', he got so biggity dat Mars Jackson, de oberseah, ha' ter th'eaten ter whip 'im, ef he didn' stop cuttin' up his didos en behave hisse'f. But de mos' cur'ouses' thing happen' in de fall, when de sap begin ter go down in de grapevimes. Fus', when de grapes 'uz gethered, de knots begun ter straighten out'n Henry's ha'r; en w'en de leaves begin ter fall, Henry's ha'r commence' ter drap out; en when de vimes 'uz bar', Henry's head wuz baller'n it wuz in de spring, en he begin ter git ole en stiff in de j'ints ag'in, en paid no mo' 'tention ter de gals dyoin' er de whole winter. En nex' spring, w'en he rub de sap on ag'in, he got young ag'in, en so soopl en libely dat none er de young niggers on de plantation couldn' jump, ner dance, ner hoe ez much cotton ez Henry. But in de fall er de year his grapes 'mence' ter straighten out, en his j'ints ter git stiff, en his ha'r drap off, en de rheumatiz begin ter wrastle wid 'im.

"Now, ef you'd 'a' knowed ole Mars Dugal' McAdoo, you'd 'a' knowed dat it ha' ter be a mighty rainy day when he couldn' fine sump'n fer his niggers ter do, en it ha' ter be a mighty little hole he couldn' crawl thoo, en ha' ter be a monst'us cloudy night when a dollar git by him in de

dahkness; en w'en he see how Henry git young in de spring en ole in de fall, he 'lowed ter hisse'f ez how he could make mo' money out'n Henry dan by wukkin' him in de cotton-fiel'. 'Long de nex' spring, atter de sap 'mence' ter rise, en Henry 'n'int 'is head en sta'ted fer ter git young en soopl, Mars Dugal' up'n tuk Henry ter town, en sole 'im fer fifteen hunder' dollars. Co'se de man w'at bought Henry didn' know nuffin 'bout de goopher, en Mars Dugal' didn' see no 'casion fer ter tell 'im. Long to'ds de fall, w'en de sap went down, Henry begin ter git ole ag'in same ez yuzhal, en his noo marster begin ter git skeered les'n he gwine ter lose his fifteen-hunder'-dollar nigger. He sent fer a mighty fine doctor, but de med'cine didn' 'pear ter do no good; de goopher had a good holt. Henry tole de doctor 'bout de goopher, but de doctor des laff at 'im.

"One day in de winter Mars Dugal' went ter town, en wuz santerin' 'long de Main Street, when who should he meet but Henry's noo master. Dey said 'Hoddy,' en Mars Dugal' ax 'im ter hab a seegyar; en atter dey run on awhile 'bout de craps en de weather, Mars Dugal' ax 'im, sorter keerless, like ez ef he des thought of it,—

" 'How you like de nigger I sole you las' spring?'

"Henry's marster shuck his head en knock de ashes off'n his seegyar.

" 'Spec' I made a bad bahgin when I bought dat nigger. Henry done good wuk all de summer, but sence de fall set in he 'pears ter be sorter pinin' away. Dey ain' nuffin pertickler de matter wid 'im—leastways de doctor say so—'cep'n' a tech er de rheumatiz; but his ha'r is all fell out, en ef he don't pick up his strenk mighty soon, I spec' I'm gwine ter lose 'im.'

"Dey smoked on awhile, en bimeby ole mars say, 'Well, a bahgin 's a bahgin, but you en me is good fren's, en I doan wan' ter see you lose all de money you paid fer dat nigger; en ef w'at you say is so, en I ain't 'sputin' it, he ain't wuf much now. I spec's you wukked him too ha'd dis summer, er e'se de swamps down here don't agree

wid de san'-hill nigger. So you des lemme know, en ef he gits any wusser I'll be willin' ter gib yer five hund'ed dollars for 'im, en take my chances on his livin'.'

"Sho 'nuff, when Henry begun ter draw up wid de rheumatiz en it look like he gwine ter die fer sho, his noo marster sen' fer Mars Dugal', en Mars Dugal' gin him what he promus, en brung Henry home ag'in. He tuk good keer uv 'im dyoin' er de winter,—give 'im w'iskey ter rub his rheumatiz, en terbacker ter smoke, en all he want ter eat,—'caze a nigger w'at he could make a thousan' dollars a year off'n didn' grow on eve'y huckleberry bush.

"Nex' spring, w'en de sap rise en Henry's ha'r commence' ter sprout, Mars Dugal' sole 'im ag'in, down in Robeson County dis time; en he kep' dat sellin' business up fer five year er mo'. Henry nebber say nuffin 'bout de goopher ter his noo marsters, 'caze he know he gwine ter be tuk good keer uv de nex' winter, w'en Mars Dugal' buy him back. En Mars Dugal' made 'nuff money off'n Henry ter buy anudder plantation ober on Beaver Crick.

"But 'long 'bout de een 'er dat five year dey come a stranger ter stop at de plantation. De fus' day he 'uz dere he went out wid Mars Dugal' en spent all de mawnin' lookin' ober de vimya'd, en atter dinner dey spent all de evenin' playin' kya'ds. De niggers soon 'skivver' dat he wuz a Yankee, en dat he come down ter Norf C'lina fer ter l'arn de w'ite folks how to raise grapes en make wine. He promus Mars Dugal' he c'd make de grapevimes b'ar twice't ez many grapes, en dat de noo winepress he wuz a-sellin' would make mo' d'n twice't ez many gallons er wine. En ole Mars Dugal' des drunk it all in, des 'peared ter be bewitch' wid dat Yankee. W'en de darkies see dat Yankee runnin' 'roun' de vimya'd en diggin' under de grapevimes, dey shuk dere heads, en 'lowed dat dey feared Mars Dugal' losin' his min'. Mars Dugal' had all de dirt dug away fum under de roots er all de scuppernon' vimes, an' let 'em stan' dat away fer a week er mo'. Den dat Yankee made de niggers fix up a mixtry er lime en ashes

en manyo, en po' it 'roun' de roots er de grapevimes. Den he 'vise Mars Dugal' fer ter trim de vimes close't, en Mars Dugal' tuck 'n done eve'ything de Yankee tole him ter do. Dyoin' all er dis time, mine yer, dis yer Yankee wuz libbin' off'n de fat er de lan,' at de big house, en playin' kya'ds wid Mars Dugal' eve'y night; en dey say Mars Dugal' los' mo'n a thousan' dollars dyoin' er de week dat Yankee wuz a-ruinin' de grapevimes.

"W'en de sap ris nex' spring, ole Henry 'n'inted his head ez yuzhal, en his ha'r 'mence' ter grow des de same ez it done eve'y year. De scuppernon' vimes growed monst's fas', en de leaves wuz greener en thicker dan dey eber be'n dyoin' my rememb'ance; en Henry's ha'r growed out thicker dan eber, en he 'peared ter git younger 'n younger, en soopler; en seein' ez he wuz sho't er han's dat spring, havin' tuk in consid'able noo groun', Mars Dugal' git de crap in en de cotton chop'. So he kep' Henry on de plantation.

"But 'long 'bout time fer de grapes ter come on de scuppernon' vimes, dey 'peared ter come a change ober 'em; de leaves withered en swivel' up, en de young grapes turn' yaller, en bimeby eve'ybody on de plantation could see dat de whole vimya'd wuz dyin'. Mars Dugal' tuk'n water de vimes en done all he could, but't wa'n' no use: dat Yankee had done bus' de watermillyum. One time de vimes picked up a bit, en Mars Dugal' 'lowed dey wuz gwine ter come out ag'in; but dat Yankee done dug too close under de roots, en prune de branches too close ter de vime, en all dat lime en ashes done burn de life out'm de vimes, en dey des kep' a-with'in' en a-swivelin'.

"All dis time de goopher wuz a-wukin'. When de vimes sta'ted ter wither, Henry 'mence' ter complain er his rheumatiz; en when de leaves begin ter dry up, his ha'r 'mence' ter drap out. When de vimes fresh' up a bit, Henry 'd git peart ag'in, en when de vimes wither' ag'in, Henry 'd git ole ag'in, en des kep' gittin' mo' fitten fer nuffin; he des pined away, en pined away, en fin'ly tuk ter his cabin;

en when de big vime whar he got de sap ter 'n'int his head withered en turned yaller en died, Henry died too,—des went out sorter like a cannel. Dey didn't 'pear ter be nuffin de matter wid 'im, 'cep'n' de rheumatiz, but his strenk des dwinel' away 'tel he didn' hab ernuff lef' ter draw his bref. De goopher had got de under holt, en th'owed Henry dat time fer good en all.

"Mars Dugal' tuk on might'ly 'bout losin' his vimes en his nigger in de same year; en he swo' dat ef he could git holt er dat Yankee he'd wear 'im ter a frazzle, en den chaw up de frazzle; en he'd done it, too, for Mars Dugal' 'uz a monst'us brash man w'en he once git started. He sot de vimya'd out ober ag'in, but it wuz th'ee er fo' year befo' de vimes got ter b'arin' any scuppernon's.

"W'en de wah broke out, Mars Dugal' raise' a comp'ny, en went off ter fight de Yankees. He say he wuz mighty glad wah come, en he des want ter kill a Yankee fer eve'y dollar he los' 'long er dat grape-raisin' Yankee. En I 'spec' he would 'a' done it, too, ef de Yankees hadn' s'picioned sump'n, en killed him fus'. Atter de s'render ole miss move' ter town, de niggers all scattered 'way fum de plantation, en de vimya'd ain' be'n cultervated sence."

"Is that story true?" asked Annie doubtfully, but seriously, as the old man concluded his narrative.

"It's des ez true ez I'm a-settin' here, miss. Dey's a easy way ter prove it: I kin lead de way right ter Henry's grave ober yonder in de plantation buryin'-groun'. En I tell yer w'at, marster, I wouldn' 'vise you to buy dis yer ole vimya'd, 'caze de goopher's on it yit, en dey ain' no tellin' w'en it's gwine ter crap out."

"But I thought you said all the old vines died."

"Dey did 'pear ter die, but a few un 'em come out ag'in, en is mixed in 'mongs' de yuthers. I ain' skeered ter eat de grapes 'caze I knows de old vimes fum de noo ones; but wid strangers dey ain' no tellin' w'at mought happen. I wouldn' 'vise yer ter buy dis vimya'd."

I bought the vineyard, nevertheless, and it has been for

a long time in a thriving condition, and is often referred to by the local press as a striking illustration of the opportunities open to Northern capital in the development of Southern industries. The luscious scuppernong holds first rank among our grapes, though we cultivate a great many other varieties, and our income from grapes packed and shipped to the Northern markets is quite considerable. I have not noticed any developments of the goopher in the vineyard, although I have a mild suspicion that our colored assistants do not suffer from want of grapes during the season.

I found, when I bought the vineyard, that Uncle Julius had occupied a cabin on the place for many years, and derived a respectable revenue from the product of the neglected grapevines. This, doubtless, accounted for his advice to me not to buy the vineyard, though whether it inspired the goopher story I am unable to state. I believe, however, that the wages I paid him for his services as coachman, for I gave him employment in that capacity, were more than an equivalent for anything he lost by the sale of the vineyard.

THE YELLOW ONE

By ERIC WALROND

I

Once catching a glimpse of her, they swooped down like a brood of starving hawks. But it was the girl's first vision of the sea, and the superstitions of a Honduras peasant heritage tightened her grip on the old rusty canister she was dragging with a frantic effort on to the *Urubamba's* gangplank.

"Le' me help yo', dahtah," said one.

"Go 'way, man, yo' too farrad—'way!"

" 'Im did got de fastiness fi' try fi' jump ahead o' me again, but mahn if yo' t'ink yo' gwine duh me outa a meal yo' is a dam pitty liar!"

"Wha' yo' ah try fi' do, leggo!" cried the girl, slapping the nearest one. But the shock of her words was enough to paralyze them.

They were a harum-scarum lot, hucksters, ex-cable divers and thugs of the coast. barefooted, brown-faced, raggedty—drifting from every cave and creek of the Spanish Main.

They withdrew, shocked, uncertain of their ears, staring at her; at her whom the peons of the lagoon idealized as *la madurita*: the yellow one.

Sensing the hostility, but unable to fathom it, she felt guilty of some untoward act, and guardedly lowered her eyes.

Flushed and hot, she seized the canister by the handle and started resuming the journey. It was heavy. More energy was required to move it than she had bargained on.

In the dilemma, rescuing footsteps were heard coming down the gangplank. She was glad to admit she was

stumped, and stood back, confronted by one of the crew. He was tall, some six feet and over, and a mestizo like herself. Latin blood bubbled in his veins, and it served at once to establish a ready means of communication between them.

"I'll take it," he said, quietly, "you go aboard—"

"Oh, many thanks," she said, "and do be careful, I've got the baby bottle in there and I wouldn't like to break it." All this in Spanish, a tongue spontaneously springing up between them.

She struggled up the gangplank, dodging a sling drooping tipsily on to the wharf. "Where are the passengers for Kingston station?" she asked.

"Yonder!" he pointed, speeding past her. Amongst a contortion of machinery, cargo, nets and hatch panels he deposited the trunk.

Gazing at his hardy hulk, two emotions seared her. She wanted to be grateful, but he wasn't the sort of person she could offer a tip to. And he would readily see through her telling him that Alfred was down the dock changing the money.

But he warmed to her rescue. "Oh, that's all right," he said, quite illogically, "stay here till they close the hatch, then if I am not around, somebody will help you put it where you want it."

Noises beat upon her. Vendors of tropical fruits cluttered the wharf, kept up sensuous cries; stir and clamor and screams rose from every corner of the ship. Men swerved about her, the dock hands, the crew, digging cargo off the pier and spinning it into the yawning hatch.

"Wha' ah lot o' dem," she observed, "an' dem so black and ugly. R—r—r—!" Her words had the anti-native quality of her Jamaica spouse's, Alfred St. Xavier Mendez.

The hatch swelled, the bos'n closed it, and the siege commenced. "If Ah did got any sense Ah would Ah wait till dem clean way de rope befo' me mek de sailor boy put down de trunk. Howsomevah, de Lawd will provide, an'

all me got fi' do is put me trus' in Him till Halfred come."

With startling alacrity, her prayers were answered, for there suddenly appeared a thin, moon-faced decker, a coal-black fellow with a red greasy scarf around his neck, his teeth giddy with an ague he had caught in Puerta Tela and which was destined never to leave him. He seized the trunk by one end and helped her hoist it on the hatch. When he had finished, he didn't wait for her trepid words of thanks but flew to the ship's rail, convulsively shaking.

She grew restive. "What' dat Halfred, dey, eh," she cried. "Wha' a man can pacify time dough, eh?"

The stream of amassing deckers overran the *Urubamba's* decks. The din of parts being slugged to rights buzzed. An oily strip of canvas screened the hatch. Deckers clamorously crept underneath it.

The sea lay torpid, sizzling. Blue rust flaked off the ship's sides shone upon it. It dazzled you. It was difficult to divine its true color. Sometimes it was so blue it blinded you. Another time it would turn, with the cannon roar of the sun, red. Nor was it the red of fire or of youth, of roses or of red tulips. But a sullen, grizzled red. The red of a North Sea rover's icicled beard; the red of a red-headed woman's hair; the red of a red-hot oven. It gave to the water engulfing the ship a dark, copper-colored hue. It left on it jeweled crusts.

A bow-legged old Maroon, with a trunk on his head, explored the deck, smoking a gawky clay pipe of some fiery Jamaica bush and wailing, "Scout bway, scout bway, wha' you' dey? De old man ah look fa' yo'." The trunk was beardy and fuzzy with the lashes of much-used rope. It was rapidly dusking, and a woman and an amazing brood of children came on. One pulled, screaming, at her skirt, one was astride a hip, another, an unclothed one, tugged enthusiastically at a full, ripened breast. A hoary old black man, in a long black coat, who had taken the Word, no doubt, to the yellow "heathen" of the fever-hot lagoon, shoeless, his hard white crash pants rolled up above

his hairy, veiny calves, with a lone yellow pineapple as his sole earthly reward.

A tar-black Jamaica sister, in a gown of some noisy West Indian silk, her face entirely removed by the shadowy girth of a leghorn hat, waltzed grandly up on the deck. The edge of her skirt in one hand, after the manner of the ladies at Wimbledon, in the other a fluttering macaw, she was twittering, "Hawfissah, hawfissah, wear is he hawfissah, he?" Among the battering hordes there were less brusque folk; a native girl,—a flower, a brown flower—was alone, rejecting the opulent offer of a bunk, quietly vowing to pass two nights of sleepful concern until she got to Santiago. And two Costa Rica maidens, white, dainty, resentful, and uncommunicative.

He came swaggering at last. La Madurita said, "Wha' yo' been, Halfred, all dis lang time, no?"

"Cho, it wuz de man dem down dye," he replied, "dem keep me back." He gave her the sleeping child, and slipped down to doze on the narrow hatch.

In a mood of selfless bluster he was returning to Kingston. He adored Jamaica. He would go on sprees of work and daring, to the jungles of Changuinola or the Cut at Culebra, but such flights, whether for a duration of one or ten years, were uplifted mainly by the traditional deprivations of Hindu coolies or Polish immigrants—sunless, joyless. Similarly up in Cabello; work, sleep, work; day in and day out for six forest-hewing years. And on Sabbaths a Kentucky evangelist, a red-headed hypochondriac, the murky hue of a British buckra from the heat of the tropic sun, tearfully urged the blacks to embrace the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ before the wrath of Satan engulfed them. Then, one day, on a tramp to Salamanca, a fancy struck him. It stung, was unexpected. He was unused to the sensations it set going. It related to a vision—something he had surreptitiously encountered. Behind a planter's hut he had seen it. He was slowly walking along the street, shaded by a row of plum trees, and there she was, glori-

ously unaware of him, bathing her feet in ample view of the sky. She was lovely to behold. Her skin was the ripe red gold of the Honduras half-breed. It sent the blood streaming to his head. He paused and wiped the sweat from his face. He looked at her, calculating. Five—six—seven-fifty. Yes, that'd do. With seven hundred and fifty pounds, he'd dazzle the foxy folk of Kingston with the mellow *Spanish* beauty of her.

In due time, and by ample means, he had been able to bring round the girl's hitherto *chumbo*-hating folk.

"Him mus' be hungry," she said, gazing intently at the baby's face.

"Cho'," replied Alfred, "leave de picknee alone, le' de gal picknee sleep." He rolled over, face downwards, and folded his arms under his chin. He wore a dirty khaki shirt, made in the States, dark green corduroy pants and big yellow shoes which he seldom took off.

Upright on the trunk, the woman rocked the baby and nursed it. By this time the hatch was overcrowded with deckers.

Down on the dock, oxen were yoked behind wagons of crated bananas. Gnawing on plugs of hard black tobacco, and firing reels of spit to every side of them, New Orleans "crackers" swearingly cursed the leisurely lack of native labor. Scaly ragamuffins darted after boxes of stale cheese and crates of sun-sopped iced apples that were dumped in the sea.

II

The dawning sunlight pricked the tarpaulin and fell upon the woman's tired, sleep-sapped face. Enamel clanged and crashed. A sickly, sour-sweet odor pervaded the hatch. The sea was calm, gulls scuttled low, seizing and ecstatically devouring some reckless, sky-drunk sprat.

"Go, no, Halfred," cried the woman, the baby in her arms, "an' beg de backra man fi' giv' yo' a can o' hot water fi' mek de baby tea. Go no?"

He rolled over lazily; his loggish yellow bulk, solid, dispirited. "Cho', de man dem no ha' no hot water, giv' she a lemon, no, she na'h cry." He tossed back again, his chin on his arms, gazing at the glorious procession of the sun.

"Even de man dem, ovah yondah," she cried, gesticulating, "a hold a kangfarance fi' get some hot water. Why yo' don't get up an' go, no man? Me can't handastan' yo', sah."

A conspiration, a pandemonium threatened—the deckers.

"How de bleedy hell dem heckspeck a man fi' trabble tree days an' tree whole-a nights beout giv' him any hot watah fi' mek even a can o' tea is somet'ing de hagent at Kingston gwine hav' fi' pint out to me w'en de boat dey lan'—"

"Hey, mistah hawfissah, yo' got any hot watah?"

"Hot watah, mistah?"

"Me will giv' yo' a half pint o' red rum if yo' giv' me a quatty wut' o' hot watah."

"Come, no, man, go get de watah, no?"

"Ripe apples mek me t'row up!"

"Green tamarin' mek me tummack sick!"

"Sahft banana mek me fainty!"

"Fish sweetie giv' me de dysentery."

Craving luscious Havana nights the ship's scullions hid in refuse cans or in grub for the Chinks hot water which they peddled to the miserable deckers.

"Get up, no Halfred, an' go buy some o' de watah," the girl cried; "de baby a-cry."

Of late he didn't answer her any more. And it was useless to depend upon him. Frantic at the baby's pawing of the clotted air, at the cold dribbling from its twisted mouth, which turned down a trifle at the ends like Alfred's, she began conjecturing on the use to which a decker could put a cup of the precious liquid. Into it one might pour a gill of goat's milk—a Cuban *señora,* a decker of several voyages, had fortified herself with a bucket of it—or melt a

sprig of peppermint or a lump of clove or a root of ginger. So many tropical things one could do with a cup of hot water.

The child took on the color of its sweltering environs. It refused to be pacified by sugared words. It was hungry and it wished to eat, to feel coursing down its throat something warm and delicious. It kicked out of its mother's hand the toy engine she locomotioned before it. It cried, it rippled with its naked toes a hole in her blouse. It kept up an irrepressible racket.

The child's agony drove her to reckless alternatives. "If you don't go, then I'll go, yo' lazy t'ing," she said, depositing the baby beside him and disappearing down the galley corridor.

Her bare earth-red feet slid on the hot, sizzling deck. The heat came roaring at her. It swirled, enveloping her. It was a dingy corridor and there were pigmy paneled doors every inch along it. It wasn't clear to her whither she was bound; the vaporing heat dizzied things. But the scent of stewing meat and vegetables lured her on. It sent her scudding in and out of barrels of cold storage, mounds of ash débris of an exotic kind. It shot her into dark twining circles of men, talking. They either paused or grew lecherous at her approach. Some of the doors to the crew's quarters were open and as she passed white men'd stick out their heads and call, pull, tug at her. Grimy, ash-stained faces; leprous, flesh-brazed hands. Onward she fled, into the roaring, fuming galley.

Heat. Hearths aglow. Stoves aglow. Dishes clattering. Engines, donkey-engines, wheezing. Bright-faced and flame-haired Swedes and Bristol cockneys cursing. Half-nude figures of bronze and crimson shouting, spearing, mending the noisy fire. The wet, clean, brick-colored deck danced to the rhythm of the ship. Darky waiters—white shirt bosoms—black bow ties—black, braided uniforms—spat entire menus at the blond cooks.

"Slap it on dey, Dutch, don't starve de man."

"Hey, Hubigon, tightenin' up on any mo' hoss flesh today?"

"Come on, fellahs, let's go—"

"There's my boy, Porto Rico, again, Hubigon. Ah tell yo' he is a sheik, tryin' to git nex' to dat hot yallah mamma."

On entering she had turned, agonized and confused, to a lone yellow figure by the port hole.

"Oh, it's you," she exclaimed, and smiled wanly.

He was sourly sweeping dishes, forks, egg-stained things into a mossy wooden basket which he hoisted and dropped into a cesspool of puttering water.

He paused, blinking uncomprehendingly.

"You," she was catching at mementos, "you remember —you helped me—my trunk—"

"Oh, yes, I remember," he said slowly. He was a Cuban, mix-blooded, soft-haired, and to him, as she stood there, a bare, primitive soul, her beauty and her sex seemed to be in utmost contrast to his mechanical surroundings.

"Can you," she said, in that half-hesitant way of hers, "can you give me some hot watah fo' my baby?"

He was briefly attired; overalls, a dirty, pink singlet. His reddish-yellow face, chest and neck shone with the grease and sweat. His face was buttered with it.

"Sure," he replied, seizing an empty date can on the ledge of the port hole and filling it. "Be careful," he cautioned, handing it back to her.

She took it and their eyes meeting, fell.

She started to go, but a burning touch of his hand possessed her.

"Wait," he said, "I almost forgot something." From beneath the machine he exhumed an old, moist gold-dust box. Inside it he had pummeled, by some ornate instinct, odds and ends—echoes of the breakfast table. He gave the box to her, saying, "If any one should ask you where you got it, just say Jota Arosemena gave it to you."

"Hey, Porto Rico, wha' the hell yo' git dat stuff at, hotting stuff fo' decks?"

Both of them turned, and the Cuban paled at the jaunty mug of the cook's Negro mate.

"You speak to me?" he said, ice cool.

Hate shone on the black boy's face. "Yo' heard me!" he growled. "Yo' ain't cock-eyed." Ugly, grim, black, his face wore an uneasy leer. He was squat and bleary-eyed.

A son of the Florida Gulf, he hated "Porto Rico" for reasons planted deep in the Latin's past. He envied him the gentle texture of his hair. On mornings in the galley where they both did their toilet he would poke fun at the Cuban's meticulous care in parting it. "Yo' ain't gwine sho," Hubigon'd growl. "Yo' don't have to dress up like no lady's man." And Jota, failing to comprehend the point of view, would question, "What's the matter with you, mang, you mek too much noise, mang." Hubigon despised him because he was yellow-skinned; one night in Havana he had spied him and the chief cook, a nifty, freckle-faced Carolina "cracker," for whom the cook's mate had no earthly use, and the baker's assistant, a New Orleans creole, —although the Negro waiters aboard were sure he was a "yallah" nigger—drinking anee in a high-hat café on the prado which barred jet-black American Negroes. He loathed the Latin for his good looks and once at a port on the Buenaventura River they had gone ashore and met two native girls. One was white, her lips pure as the petals of a water lily; the other was a flaming mulatto. That night, on the steps of an adobe hut, a great, low moon in the sky, both forgot the presence of the cook's mate and pledged tear-stained love to Jota. "An' me standin' right by him, doin' a fadeaway." He envied Jota his Cuban nationality for over and over again he had observed that the Latin was the nearest thing to a white man the ofay men aboard had yet met. They'd play cards with him—something they never did with the Negro crew—they'd gang with him in foreign ports, they'd listen in a "natural" sort of way to all the bosh he had to say.

Now all the mate's pent-up wrath came foaming to the front.

He came up, the girl having tarried, a cocky, chesty air about him. He made deft, telling jabs at the vapors enmeshing him. "Yo' can't do that," he said, indicating the victuals, "like hell yo' kin! Who de hell yo' t'ink yo' is, anyhow? Yo' ain't bettah'n nobody else. Put it back, big boy, befo' Ah starts whisperin' to de man. Wha' yo' t'ink you is at, anyhow, in Porto Rico, where yo' come fum at? Cum' handin' out poke chops an' cawn muffins, like yo' is any steward. Yo' cain't do dat, ole man."

It slowly entered the other's brain—all this edgy, snappy, darky talk. But the essence of it was aggressively reflected in the mate's behavior. Hubigon made slow measured steps forward, and the men came flocking to the corner.

"Go to it, Silver King, step on his corns."

"Stick him with a ice pick!"

"Easy, fellahs, the steward's comin'."

All of them suddenly fell away. The steward, initiating some fruit baron into the mysteries of the galley, came through, giving them time to speed back to their posts unobserved. The tension subsided, and Jota once more fed the hardware to the dish machine.

As she flew through the corridor all sorts of faces, white ones, black ones, brown ones, leered sensually at her. Her steps quickened, her heart beat faster and faster till she left behind her the droning of the galley, and safely ascending the hatch, felt on her face the soft, cool breezes of the Caribbean ocean.

Alfred was sitting up, the unpacified baby in his arms.

" 'Im cry all de time yo' went 'way," he said. "Wha' yo' t'ink is de mattah wit' 'im, he? Yo' t'ink him tummack a hut 'im?"

"Him is hungry, dat is wha' is de mattah wit' 'im! Move, man! 'Fo Ah knock yo', yah! Giv' me 'im, an' get outa me way! Yo' is only a dyam noosant!"

"Well, what is de mattah, now?" he cried in unfeigned surprise.

"Stid o' gwine fo' de watah yo'self yo' 'tan' back yah an' giv' hawdahs an' worryin' wha' is de mattah wit' de picknee."

"Cho, keep quiet, woman, an' le' me lie down." Satisfied, he rolled back on the hatch, fatuously staring at the sun sweeping the tropic blue sea.

. . . . . .

"Tu'n ovah, Halfred, an' lif' yo' big able self awf de baby, yo' Ah crush 'im to de't'," she said, awake at last. The baby was awake and ravenous before dawn and refused to be quieted by the witty protestations of the Jamaica laborers scrubbing down the deck. But it was only after the sun, stealing a passage through a crack in the canvas, had warmed a spot on the girl's mouth, that she was constrained to respond to his zestful rantings. "Hey, yo' heah de picknee ah bawl all de time an' yo' won't even tek heed—move yah man!" She thrust the sleeping leg aside and drawing the child to her, stuck a breast in his mouth.

The boat had encountered a sultry sea, and was dipping badly. Water flooded her decks. Getting wet, dozing deckers crawled higher on top of each other. The sea was blue as indigo and white reels of foam swirled past as the ship dived ahead.

It was a disgusting spectacle. There was the sea, drumming on the tinsel sides of the ship, and on top of the terror thus resulting rose a wretched wail from the hatch, "Watah! Hot watah!"

The galley was the Bastille. Questioning none, the Yellow One, giving the baby to Alfred, rushed to the door, and flung herself through it. Once in the corridor, the energy of a dynamo possessed her. Heat mist drenched her. She slid on the grimy, sticky deck.

He was hanging up the rag on a brace of iron over the port hole. His jaws were firm, grim, together.

The rest of the galley was a fœtid blur to her.

He swung around, and his restless eyes met her. He was for the moment paralyzed. His eyes bore into hers. He itched to toss at her words, words, words! He wanted to say, "Oh, why couldn't you stay away—ashore—down there—at the end of the world—anywhere but on this ship."

"Some water," she said with that gentle half-hesitant smile of hers. "Can I get some hot water for my little baby?" And she extended the skillet.

He took it to the sink, his eyes still on hers. The water rained into it like bullets and he brought it to her.

But a sound polluted the lovely quiet.

"Hey, Porto Rico, snap into it. Dis ain't no time to git foolin' wit' no monkey jane. Get a move on dey, fellah, an' fill dis pail full o' water."

He was sober, afar, as he swept a pale, tortured face at Hubigon. As if it were the song of a lark, he swung back to the girl, murmuring, "Ah, but you didn't tell me," he said, "you didn't tell me what the baby is, a boy or girl?" For answer, the girl's eyes widened in terror at something slowly forming behind him.

But it was not without a shadow, and Jota swiftly ducked. The mallet went galloping under the machine. He rose and faced the cook's mate. But Hubigon was not near enough to objectify the jab, sent as fast as the fangs of a striking snake, and Jota fell, cursing, to the hushed cries of the woman. For secretly easing over to the fireplace Hubigon had taken advantage of the opening to grasp a spear and as the other was about to rise brought it thundering down on the tip of his left shoulder. It sent him thudding to the deck in a pool of claret. The cook's mate, his red, red tongue licking his mouth after the manner of a collie in from a strenuous run, pounced on the emaciated figure in the corner, and kicked and kicked it murderously. He kicked him in the head, in the mouth, in the ribs. When he struggled to rise, he sent him back to the floor, dizzy from short, telling jabs with the tip of his boot.

Pale, impassive, the men were prone to take sides. Un-

consciously forming a ring, the line was kept taut. Sometimes it surged; once an Atlanta mulatto had to wrest a fiery spear from Foot Works, Hubigon's side-kick, and thrust it back in its place. "Keep outa this, if you don't want to get your goddam head mashed in," he said. A woman, a crystal panel in the gray, ugly pattern, tore, fought, had to be kept sane by raw, meaty hands.

Gasping, Hubigon stood by, his eyes shining at the other's languid effort to rise. "Stan' back, fellahs, an' don't interfere. Let 'im come!" With one shoulder jaunty and a jaw risen, claret-drenched, redolent of the stench and grime of Hubigon's boot, parts of it clinging to him, the Cuban rose. A cruel scowl was on his face.

The crowd stood back, and there was sufficient room for them. Hubigon was ripping off his shirt, and licking his red, bleeding lips. He circled the ring like a snarling jungle beast. "Hol' at fuh me, Foot Works, I'm gwine sho' dis monkey wheh he get off at." He was dancing round, jabbing, tapping at ghosts, awaiting the other's beastly pleasure.

As one cowed he came, his jaw swollen. Then with the vigor of a maniac he straightened, facing the mate. He shot out his left. It had the wings of a dart and juggled the mate on the chin. Hubigon's ears tingled distantly. For the particle of a second he was groggy, and the Cuban moored in with the right, flush on the chin. Down the cook's mate went. Leaping like a tiger cat, Jota was upon him, burying his claws in the other's bared, palpitating throat. His eyes gleamed like a tiger cat's. He held him by the throat and squeezed him till his tongue came out. He racked him till the blood seeped through his ears. Then, in a frenzy of frustration, he lifted him up, and pounded with his head on the bared deck. He pounded till the shirt on his back split into ribbons.

"Jesus, take him awf o' him—he's white arready."

"Now, boys, this won't do," cried the baker, a family man. "Come."

And some half dozen of them, running counter to the traditions of the coast, ventured to slug them apart. It was a gruesome job, and Hubigon, once freed, his head and chest smeared with blood, black, was already to peg at a lancing La Barrie snake.

In the scuffle the woman collapsed, fell under the feet of the milling crew.

"Here," some one cried, "take hold o' her. Butch, she's your kind—she's a decker—hatch four—call the doctor somebody, will ya?"

They took her on a stretcher to the surgeon's room.

. . . . . .

The sun had leaped ahead. A sizzling luminosity drenched the sea. Aft the deckers were singing hosannas to Jesus and preparing to walk the gorgeous earth.

Only Alfred St. Xavier Mendez was standing with the baby in his arms, now on its third hunger-nap, gazing with a bewildered look at the deserted door to the galley. "Me wondah wha' mek she 'tan' so lang," he whispered anxiously.

Imperceptibly shedding their drapery of mist, there rose above the prow of the *Urubamba* the dead blue hills of Jamaica.

BLADES OF STEEL

By RUDOLPH FISHER

I

Negro Harlem's three broad highways form the letter H, Lenox and Seventh Avenues running parallel northward, united a little above their midpoints by east-and-west 135th Street.

Lenox Avenue is for the most part the boulevard of the unperfumed; "rats" they are often termed. Here, during certain hours, there is nothing unusual in the flashing of knives, the quick succession of pistol shots, the scream of a police-whistle or a woman.

But Seventh Avenue is the promenade of high-toned dickties and strivers. It breathes a superior atmosphere, sings superior songs, laughs a superior laugh. Even were there no people, the difference would be clear: the middle of Lenox Avenue is adorned by street-car tracks, the middle of Seventh Avenue by parking.

These two highways, frontiers of the opposed extremes of dark-skinned social life, are separated by an intermediate any-man's land, across which they communicate chiefly by way of 135th Street. Accordingly 135th Street is the heart and soul of black Harlem; it is common ground, the natural scene of unusual contacts, a region that disregards class. It neutralizes, equilibrates, binds, rescues union out of diversity.

In a fraction of a mile of 135th Street there occurs every institution necessary to civilization from a Carnegie Library opposite a public school at one point to a police station beside an undertaker's parlor at another. But one institution outnumbers all others, an institution which,

like the street itself, represents common ground: the barber-shop overwhelmingly predominates.

Naturally on the day of the Barbers' Annual Ball this institution clipped off among other things several working hours. The barbers had their own necks to trim, their own knots to conquer, their own jowls to shave and massage. The inevitable last-minute rush of prospective dancers, eager for eleventh-hour primping, would have kept the hosts themselves from appearing at the dance-hall, in their best, on time. Hence the association had agreed that every member's door be closed and locked today at four.

Shortly before that hour in one of 135th Street's "tonsorial parlors," the head barber, for whom a half dozen men were waiting, dismissed a patron and called "Next!" Already Eight-Ball Eddy Boyd, whose turn it was, had removed coat and collar and started toward the vacated chair.

"Make it boyish, Pop," he grinned to the fat and genial proprietor. "And long as you trimmin' me, lemme have two tickets for the stom-down tonight."

Pop Overton smiled goldenly and assumed the grand manner. "You means to grace our function wid yo' attendance?"

The other's assent was typical Harlemese:

"I don't mean to attend yo' function with my grace."

As Eight-Ball put one foot on the foot-rest of the chair, someone pulled him back ungently.

"My turn, big shorty."

Eight-Ball turned, recognized Dirty Cozzens, an enemy of several days' standing.

"My turn," disagreed he evenly.

"Yo' mistake," Dirty corrected shortly, and moved to brush the smaller man aside.

The move was unsuccessful. The smaller man exhibited something of the stability of a fire-plug which one attempts to boot off the sidewalk. Dirty had bumped him without anticipating such firm footing, and now himself recoiled,

careening off toward the mirrored wall with its implement-laden ledge. There was a little giggling jingle of instruments as his elbow struck this ledge. Then there was silence. Of the two barbers, one stopped pushing his clippers, but left them resting against the customer's neck while he gaped; the other halted, his razor poised, his thumb in one corner of his patron's mouth. Those who sat waiting dropped their papers, their conversation, and their lower jaws. Everybody stared. Everybody knew Dirty Cozzens.

Eight-Ball stood pat, as if awaiting an apology for the other's rudeness. Dirty also remained where he had landed, his elbow still amid the paraphernalia on the ledge, his eyes glaring, as if to let everyone see how he had been wronged.

The two made a striking contrast. Dirty Cozzens was a peculiar genetic jest. Heredity had managed to remove his rightful share of pigment even from his hair, which was pale buff. His eyes were gray, their lids rimmed red. His complexion had won him his nickname, "Dirty Yaller," of which "Dirty," was the familiar abbreviation. In every other particular his African ancestry had been preserved and accentuated. The buff hair was woolly, the nose flat with wide nostrils, the mouth big, bordered by so-called liver-lips, unbelievably thick. Within the shadow of a black skin, even, Dirty would have been a caricature; with the complexion that he actually had he was a cartoon, a malicious cartoon without humor.

So had heredity handed him over to environment, and environment had done its damnedest; had put sly cunning into the eyes, had distorted the lips into a constant sneer, had set the head at a truculent forward thrust on the large, lank body. With its present evil face, his was a head that might well have adorned the scepter of Satan.

His opponent was his antithesis. Eight-Ball had been nicknamed after that pool-ball which is black, and his skin was as dark as it is possible for skin to be, smooth and clean as an infant's. The close-cut hair hugged the scalp

evenly, the bright black eyes were alive with quick understanding, the nose was broad but sharp-ridged, with sensitive nostrils, the lips thin and firm above a courageous chin. He was beautifully small, neither heavy nor slight, of proud erect bearing, perfect poise, and a silhouette-like clean-cutness.

In the silence, Dirty's fingers reaching along the marble ledge found and caressed a barber's tool; an instrument which is the subject of many a jest but whose actual use involves no element of humor; a weapon which is as obsolete as a blunderbuss, even among those whose special heritage it is commonly supposed to be—as obsolete and as damaging. Dirty, skilled in the wielding of steel, would never have considered this instrument in a set encounter, but the devil put the thing now in his hand. He decided it would be entertaining to run his enemy out of the shop.

Pop Overton saw the movement, and it lifted him out of his daze. He said:

"Aimin' to shave yo'self, Dirty?"

"None yo' dam' business," snapped Dirty, still eyeing Eight-Ball.

"No," said Pop. " 'Tain't none my business. But hit's my razor."

Dirty drew himself together, but not erect,—"You seen what he done?"—moved then with slow menace across the distance between himself and Eight-Ball. "You seen it, didn' y'?"

"Now, listen, big boy. Don't you go startin' nothin' in my shop, you hear?"

"I ain't startin' nothin'. I'm finishin' sump'n. Dis started a week ago. Hot nigger, dis black boy, but I'm goan turn his damper down."

Eight-Ball spoke: "Don't burn yo' fingers."

Dirty advanced another step, knees bent, one hand behind him. Had Eight-Ball retreated a single foot, Dirty would have tossed the razor aside with a contemptuous laugh; would have made a fly crack about fast-black, guar-

anteed not to run; would have swaggered out, proudly acknowledging that he had picked the quarrel. But Eight-Ball had not retreated. Eight-Ball had stood still and looked at him, had even taunted him: "Don't burn yo' fingers"; had watched him approach to arm's length without budging. Ought to take one swipe at him just to scare him good. Ought to make him jump anyhow—

Whatever might have happened didn't. Instead of the expected swift sweep of an arm Dirty's next movement was a quick furtive bending of his elbow to slip the armed hand into his coat pocket; such a movement as might have greeted the entrance of an officer of the law.

As a flame flares just before it goes out, so the tension heightened, then dropped, when eyes discovered that the figure which had darkened the door was only that of a girl. She was a striking girl, however, who at once took the center of the stage.

"Whew-ee!" she breathed. "Just made it. Hi, Pop. Hello, Eighty. One minute to four! And the head barber waitin' for me! Some service—I scream—some service." Wherewith she clambered into the vacant chair and effervesced directions.

The waiting customers first ogled, then guffawed. It struck them as uproarious that two men should appear to be on the point of bloodshed over a mere turn and neither of them get it. But the girl seemed quite oblivious.

Eight-Ball greeted her: "Hello, Effie,"—grinned, and returned to his seat. Dirty shuffled to the wall opposite the mirrors, got his hat and went toward the door. As he passed the head barber's chair he paused and spoke to the girl:

"It was my turn, Miss Effie—but you kin have it." He smiled so that his thick lips broadened against his teeth, and he touched his hat and went out.

His departure released comment:

"Nice felluh!"

"Doggone! Sposin' he really got mad over sump'n!"

"He wasn't mad. He was jes' playin'."

"He better not play wi' *me* like dat."

"Take 'at thing out'n his hand and he'd run."

"Leave it *in* his hand and *you'd* run."

Then, to everyone's astonishment, before Pop Overton had assembled the proper implements, the girl jumped down from the chair, scattering stealthy glances which had been creeping toward the crimson garters just below her crossed knees.

"Whose turn was it?" she asked Pop.

"Eighty's."

"Thought so. Come on, Eighty. I got mine this morning."

"What's the idea?" wondered Eight-Ball.

"Wasn't it a fight?"

"Pretty near. How'd you know?"

"Anything wrong with these?"

A purely rhetorical question. There was certainly nothing wrong with Effie Wright's eyes—nor with her hair, nor with that rare, almost luminous dark complexion called "sealskin brown." One might complain that she was altogether too capable of taking care of herself, or that she was much too absorbed in Eight-Ball. Beyond that no sane judgment criticized.

Effie ran a beauty-parlor directly across the street, and it was to this that she now referred.

"I was lookin' out the window over there. Saw you drive up in your boss's straight-eight. Your friend was standin' in front of the saloon—he saw you too, so he come in behind you. Pop's window's got too much advertisin' in it to see through, so I come on over. Seem like I spoiled the party."

"Ain't this sump'n?" Eight-Ball asked the world.

"Angels rush in when fools is almost dead," was Pop's proverb.

"Well, since you won't open a keg o' bay rum, I guess I'll breeze.—Say, Pop, got an extra safety razor blade?—Yes—

Huh?—Oh, a customer gimme a pair o' pumps to wear to the shin-dig tonight, and I got to whittle off here and there till I can get 'em on. Cheatin' the foot-doctor.—A single-edged blade, if you got it, Pop. Double-edged one cuts y' fingers before it cuts anything else.—Thanks. Shall I lock the door on my way out?—Stop by before you haul it, Eighty."

She was gone in a flurry of words.

"Can y' beat that, Pop?" Eight-Ball laughed.

"They ain't but two like her and she's both of 'em," admitted Pop. "But what's that Cozzens boy on you for?"

"We had a little argument in a dark-john game a while back."

"Yea? Well, watch 'im, boy. Bad boogy what knows he's bad. And don't think he won't cut. He will. Thass th' onliest kind o' fightin' he knows, and he sho knows it. They's nineteen niggers 'round Harlem now totin' cuts he gave 'em. They through pullin' knives too, what I mean."

"He's that good, huh?"

"He's that bad. Served time fo' it, but he don't give a damn. Trouble is, ain't nobody never carved *him*. Somebody ought to write shorthand on his face. That'd cure him."

"Yes? Whyn't you shave him sometime, Pop?"

"Mine's accidental. Somebody ought to carve him artistically."

"Well," Eight-Ball considered thoughtfully, "maybe somebody will."

II

The Barbers' Ball does not pretend to be a dickty affair. It is announced, not by engraved cards through the mails, but by large printed placards in barber-shop windows. One is admitted, not by presenting a card of invitation, but by presenting a dollar bill in exchange for a ticket. It is a come-one, come-all occasion, where aspiring local

politicians are likely to mount the platform between dances and make announcements and bow while influential bootleggers cheer. It was quite fitting, therefore, that this fête of, for, and in spite of the people should take place on 135th Street—this year in a second-floor dance-hall just east of Lenox Avenue.

"Well, hush my mouth!" exclaimed Eight-Ball as he and Effie entered somewhat before midnight.

"Do tell!" agreed she.

For there were decorations. Nothing subdued and elegant like the So-and-So's dance. Nothing "fly," like the Dirty Dozen's. Just color in dazzling quantity, presented through the inexpensive medium of crêpe paper—scarlet, orange, brilliant green, embracing the lights, entwining the pillars, concealing the windows, transforming the orchestral platform into a float.

The orchestra also made no pretenses. It was a so-called "low-down" orchestra and it specialized in what are known as shouts. Under the influence of this leisurely rhythm, steady, obsessing, untiring, you gradually forget all else. You can't make a misstep, you can't get uncomfortably warm, you can't grow weary—you simply fall more and more completely into the insistently joyous spirit of the thing until you are laughing and humming aloud like everyone else. You get happy in spite of yourself. This is the inevitable effect of shouts, to which the orchestra tonight largely confined its efforts.

The newcomers joined the gay, noisy dancers, finding their way not too swiftly around the crowded floor. Here someone advised them to "Get off that dime!" and there someone else suggested that they "Shake that thing!"

But the shout to which Eight-Ball and his girl inadvertently kept time had not yet saturated their emotions, and in spite of it they discussed less happy concerns.

"I been so mad I ain't had no dinner," said Eight-Ball.

" 'Bout what?"

"Notice I didn't bring the car tonight?"

"Yes. Boss usin' it?"

"No.—Know when I left your place this afternoon, after you showed me that trick?"

"Yes."

"Notice anything wrong with the car when I drove off?"

"Nope. Too busy watchin' the driver."

"I went about half a block and felt somethin' wrong. Pulled up and got out to look. Two flat tires."

"No!"

"Uh-huh. Front and back on the side away from the sidewalk."

"They was O. K. when you parked?"

"Brand new."

"Blow-outs? Slow leaks?"

"No. Cuts."

"What are you ravin' about?"

"Both tires had a six-inch gash in 'em, made with a knife—"

"What!"

"Or a razor."

Effie stopped dancing. "The yellow son-of-a-baboon!"

"Everybody says they ain't nothin' he can't do with a knife. Looks like they ain't nothin' he *won't* do."

The shout, the rhythmically jostling crowd, impelled them back into step.

"Eighty, you ought to half kill 'im. Of all the low, mean, gutter-rat tricks—you ought to lay 'im up f' a year."

"How you know I can?" he grinned.

"Can't y'?"

"I can't prove nothin' on him. Who seen him do it?"

"Nobody didn't have to see him. You know he did it."

"Nope. I can wait. He's sore. He'll keep on messin' around. Thinks he can't be had."

"He can be had all right. All I'm 'fraid of is somebody else'll have 'im first. Everybody that knows that guy hates 'im and most of 'em's scared to boot. Whoever whittles 'im down will be a hero."

As the jazz relented, the object of her anger took form out of the crowd and approached.

"Evenin', Miss Effie," said he, ignoring Eight-Ball. "Been lookin' f' you. I give you my turn in d' barber-shop today. How 'bout givin' me mine now?"

Effie looked through him at the decorations surrounding a post. As if she and Eight-Ball had been discussing the colors, she commented:

"That's one color I'm glad they forgot—I can't stand anything yellow."

Dirty turned garnet; but before his chagrin became active resentment, the music returned with a crash. Eight-Ball and Effie moved on past him, their anger partially appeased by knowing that Effie's tongue had cut like steel.

And now the shout more easily took hold on them, hammering them inexorably into its own mould. The increasing jam of people pressed them more closely into each other's arms. The husky mellowness of soft-throated saxophones against the trumpet's urge, the caress of plaintive blues-melody against the thrill of strange disharmonies, the humor of capricious traps against the solidity of unfailing bass—to these contrasts the pair abandoned themselves. Harsh laughter, queer odors, the impact of the mob became nothing. They closed their eyes and danced.

They might have danced for an hour, only half aware of the jumble of faces about, of their own jests and laughter, of the occasional intervals of rest. Then something woke them, and they suddenly realized that it was at them that people nearby were laughing—that a little space cleared about them wherever they moved and people looked at them and laughed.

At first they were unconvinced and looked around them for something comic. Then Pop Overton appeared, smiling roundly.

"Thought monkey-backs was out o' style, son."

"What—?"

"Did you have yo' coat cut to order?"

Effie switched Eight-Ball around and gasped while onlookers frankly smiled. A triangle of white shirt-back, its apex between Eight-Ball's shoulder-blades, shone through a vertical vent in his coat, a vent twice as long as any designed by a tailor. In the crush and abandonment of the dance a single downward stroke of a keen-edged instrument, light enough not to be noticed, had divided the back of the garment in two as cleanly as if it had been ripped down midseam. The white of the shirt gleamed through like a malicious grin.

As Eight-Ball examined himself unsmilingly, Pop Overton sobered. "I thought it was torn accidental," he said. "Judas Priest—I bet that—! Say, Eighty, fo' Gawd's sake don't start nothin' here. We ain't never had a row—"

Eight-Ball and Effie, faces set, stood looking at each other in silence.

Dirty Cozzens stood in the shadow of the doorway beside that leading to the Barbers' Ball and in return for a generous drink unburdened himself to a buddy.

"It was in d' back room at Nappy's place. Dis lil spade turns a black-jack and wins d' deal, see? Well, he's a-rifflin' d' cards and talkin' all d' same time, and he says, 'You guys jes' git ready to loosen up, 'cause I'm gonna deal all d' dark-johns home. I promis' my boss I wouldn' gamble no mo', but dis is jes' like pickin' up money in d' street.' Fly line, see? Den he starts dealin'. Well, I figgers dis guy's been so lucky and jes' turned a black-jack for d' deal, it's time fo' his luck to change. So I ups and stops his bank fo' twenty bucks, see? And I be dam' if he don't deal himself another black-jack—makin' two in a row!

"Well, he picks up all d' money befo' we can git our breath, see? Everybody laffs but me. I figgers day's a trick in it. Wouldn' you?"

"Sho I would. Two black-jacks in a row. Huh!"

"So I calls 'im crooked. But he jes' laffs and tells me to talk wid mo' money and less mouf. Natchelly dat makes me mad. A guy pulls a crooked deal and says sump'n like dat. Wouldn' you 'a' got mad?"

"Sho I would. Sho, man."

"So I tells him to pass back my twenty, long as he said he wasn't gamblin'. Den he stops dealin' and asts me is I big enough to take it. Tryin' to start sump'n all d' time, see?"

"Sho he was. Tryin' to staht somp'n."

"So I says I'll either take it out his pile or off his hips, see? But when I starts for him, d' guys won't let me put it on him, see? Fact dey puts me out d' game.—So natchelly I jes' got to get me some o' dis lil spade's meat, dass all. I got to. He can't git away wid nuthin' like dat."

"Tryin' to git away wi' sump'n. Huh!"

"Sho he is. But I'll git 'im."

"What you aim to do?"

"I been primin' 'im fo' a fight."

"Dey claim he's pretty good wif' 'is hands."

"Ain't gonna be no hands. See dis?"

He withdrew from his right-hand coat pocket what appeared to be a quite harmless pocket-knife. He pressed it under his thumb and a steel blade leaped forth, quick as the tongue of a snake, a blade five inches long with a sweeping curve like a tiny scimitar. It was hollow-ground and honed to exquisite sharpness. A little catch fell into place at the junction of blade and handle, preventing the protruding blade from telescoping shut. The steel gleamed like eyes in the dark.

"Whew-ee!" admired the observer.

"He won't be d' fuss one I ever put it on. And here's how I figger. His boss is tight, see. Fired two guys already fo' roughin'. Dis boogy's got two new tires to account fo' now. And when his boss sees he been out, he'll find out it's 'count o' some gamblin' scrape and fire him too. Dass where I laff. See?"

" 'Deed, boy, it's a shame fo' all dem brains to go to seed in yo' head. You could sell 'em and buy Europe, no stuff."

Then abruptly both shrank into deeper shadow as Eight-Ball and Effie came out.

III

Diagonally across the street from the dance-hall stands Teddy's place, an establishment which stays open all night and draws all manner of men and women by the common appeal of good food. Oddly, it was once a mere bar-room lunch, and the mahogany bar-counter still serves the majority of Teddy's patrons, those who are content to sit upon stools and rub elbows with anybody. But there is now a back room also, with a side entrance available from the street. Here there are round-top tables beside the walls, and here parties with ladies may be more elegantly served. It is really a "high-class" grill-room, and its relation to the bar-counter lunch-room, the whole situated on democratic 135th Street, marks Teddy a man of considerable business acumen.

In one corner of the grill-room there is an excellent phonograph which plays a record repeatedly without changing. A song ends; you wait a few moments while the instrument is automatically re-wound and adjusted; and the song begins again.

Tonight the long-distance record was Tessie Smith's "Lord Have Mercy Blues," a curious mingling of the secular and the religious, in the tragic refrain of which the unfortunate victim of trouble after trouble resorts to prayer. The record was not playing loudly, but such was the quality of Tessie Smith's voice that you heard its persistent, half-humorous pain through louder, clearer sounds.

Just now there were no such sounds, for the room was almost empty. The theatre crowd had departed; the crowd from the dance-halls had not yet arrived. Three or four couples sat about tête-à-tête, and near the phonograph

Eight-Ball and Effie. Eight-Ball's back was turned toward the wall to hide the gape in his coat.

The phonograph wailed:

My man was comin' to me—said he'd
Let me know by mail,
My man was comin' to me—said he'd
let me know by mail—
The letter come and tole me—
They'd put my lovin' man in jail.

Grief, affliction, woe, told in a tone of most heartbroken despair; desolation with the merest tincture of humor—yet those who listened heard only the humor, considered only the jest.

Mercy—Lawd, have mercy!
How come I always get bad news?
Mercy—Lawd, have mercy!
How come I always got the blues?

"Them's the blues I ought to be singin'," said Eight-Ball.

"You'll feel better after you eat," soothed the girl.

"I'll feel better after I get one good crack at that half-bleached buzzard."

"You ought to pick your comp'ny, Eighty."

Her tone surprised him. He encountered her look, mingled tenderness and reproach, and his eyes fell, ashamed.

"All right, kid. I'm off gamblin' for life.—But if that dude keeps messin' around—"

"Don't forget—he cuts."

"He better cut fast, then."

As if willing to oblige, Dirty Cozzens appeared at the door. He stood looking about, head hunched characteristically forward, right hand deep in his right coat pocket; calmly observed the relative desertion of the dining-room; then slowly advanced across the open space in the center of the floor.

Quickly Effie reached into her bag, withdrew something, put it into Eight-Ball's hand. The movement could have been seen, but the object passed was too small for the closest observation to make out. She might merely have been indulging in a heartening handclasp. Eight-Ball looked at her, first with puzzlement, then with understanding and resolution.

This time Dirty ignored Effie. This afternoon he might have had a chance with her; now he knew he had not. Then he had hidden his weapon from her; now he wanted her to see. That, too, had been largely bullying; this was serious challenge. Then he had sought but a momentary satisfaction; the satisfaction pending now would last, arising as it would out of the infliction of physical injury which should cost the victim his job. Let Effie share all of this—by all means let her see.

"Gimme my twenty bucks."

Eight-Ball looked up, allowed his gaze to pause here and there over his enemy's frame; then patted his left trousers' pocket. "It's right here.—You big enough to take it?"

"Listen, lamp-black. You been tryin' to git fly wid me ev'r since las' week, ain't y'? Put d' locks on me wid a crooked deal. Tried to start sump'n in d' barber shop today. Tole yo' woman to freeze me at d' dance tonight. Aw right. I'm warnin' y', see? I done warned you twice. I put my mark on yo' two shoes today and I put it on yo' coat tonight. D' nex' time I'm gonna put it on yo' black hide. See?"

Eight-Ball sat quite still, looking up at the lowering face.

"I tole y' I'd either take it out yo' pile or off yo' hips. Now put up or git up, you—"

Eight-Ball went up as if he'd been on a coil-spring, suddenly released. Dirty staggered backward but did not lose his footing.

Naturally none of Teddy's three waiters was in sight—

it is unlikely that they would have interfered if tney had been. Indeed, had they seen the initial blow of Eight-Ball—a familiar patron—they would have been satisfied to let him take care of himself. As for the other guests, they were interested but not alarmed. One does not yell or run at such a time unless a pistol is drawn.

Recovering balance, Dirty Cozzens withdrew his right hand from his pocket. It is difficult to believe possible the expression of evil that now contorted his features. That expression, however, was not more evil than the glint of the miniature scimitar, whose handle his right hand grasped.

He held the weapon in what pocket-knife fighters consider best form—three fingers firmly encircling the handle, but the index finger extended along the posterior, dull edge of the blade, tending to direct, brace, and conceal it. A sufficient length of the curved point extended beyond the end of the index finger to permit the infliction of a dangerously deep wound.

Eight-Ball stood ready, leaning a little forward, arms lax, both palms open—and empty.

Dirty's scowl concentrated on Eight-Ball's hands, and that he did not move at once was probably due to his astonishment at seeing no weapon in them. Any such astonishment, however, promptly gave way to quick appreciation of an advantage, and he did what a knifer rarely does. He rushed, bringing his blade swiftly across and back in a criss-cross sweep before him.

Eight-Ball neither side-stepped nor attempted to block the motion. Either might have been disastrous. Instead, he ducked by suddenly squatting, and, touching the floor with his left hand for balance, kicked suddenly out with his right foot. The sharp crack of his heel against his antagonist's shin must have almost broken it. Certainly he gained time to jump up and seize Dirty's wrist before it could execute a second descending arc.

One less skilled than Eight-Ball would have found this

useless. From such a wrist-hold the knife-hand is effectively liberated by simply inverting the weapon, which the fingers are still free to manipulate. The blade is thus brought back against its own wrist, and any fingers surrounding that wrist usually let go at once. Eighty had forestalled this contingency by a deft slipping of his grip upward over the fingers that held the knife handle. The hold that he now fastened upon those fingers was the same that had yanked two slashed balloon-tires off their rims some hours before, and it held Dirty's fingers, crushed together around their knife, as securely as a pipe-wrench holds a joint.

And now those who had watched this little fellow empty-handed win the advantage over an armed and bigger adversary saw a curious thing occur. Regularly in the ensuing scuffle Eight-Ball's right hand landed open-palmed against Dirty's face—landed again and again with a sounding smack; and for every time that it landed, presently there appeared a short red line, slowly widening into a crimson wheal.

Before long Dirty, rendered helpless now, and losing heart, raised his free hand to his face and as his fingers passed across it, the crimson wheals that they touched all ran together. He looked at the tips of those fingers, saw they were wet and red; his mouth fell open; the hand which Eight-Ball held went limp, the knife fell to the floor; and Dirty Cozzens quailed, as craven now as he'd been evil a moment before.

He began to stammer things, to deprecate, to plead; but Eight-Ball was deaf. The muscles of the latter's left arm seemed about to burst through their sleeve, while the artificial vent in the back of the coat ripped upward to the collar, as with one tremendous twist he brought the other man to his knees.

In that mad moment of triumph no one may say what disproportionate stroke of vengeance might not have

brought on real tragedy. But with that strange and terrible open palm raised, a voice halted Eight-Ball's final blow:

Have mercy—Lawd, have mercy—

Tessie Smith's voice, wailing out of an extremity of despair.

Letter come and told me—
They'd put my lovin' man in jail—

The entire engagement had occupied only the few moments during which the phonograph automatically prepared itself to repeat. Now the words came as warning and plea:

Have mercy—Lawd, have mercy—

Eight-Ball released Dirty Cozzens, stepped back, picked up a crumpled paper napkin from the table where Effie still sat.

"Wipe y' face with this. Go on 'round to the hospital." He urged Dirty, whimpering, out of the side door.

Then he turned back toward Effie, stood over the table a moment, returned her rather proud smile. Two of the men who'd looked on came up. Said one:

"Buddy, show me that trick, will you?"

Eight-Ball extended his right hand, palm downward, and spread the fingers wide open. Freed from its vise-like hiding place between firmly adjacent fingers, something fell upon the porcelain table-top. It fell with a bright flash and a little clinking sound not unlike a quick laugh of surprise—the safety-razor blade which Effie had borrowed that afternoon from Pop Overton.

FICTION

NOVEL

THE FIRE IN THE FLINT

By WALTER WHITE

Bob was packing for his journey to Cambridge, whistling cheerfully the while. It was certainly great to be going away up to Boston to school. All his life he had wanted to live there for a while where he could learn the things which he knew of only at second-hand now. He pictured in his mind how he would arrange his life at school. There'd be none of the kiddish pranks he had read about that college boys did. He was too old for that. He had seen too much of the seamy and sordid side of life to waste *his* time playing. He'd study every minute he could. He'd make a record in scholarship that would make his mother and Mamie and Kenneth proud of him. He'd go to summer school so as to finish the rest of his college course in two years instead of three. And then, law school. By jiminy, he'd be the best lawyer there was! Not the best *colored* lawyer. The best *lawyer!* Never did youth have more brilliant dreams of life than Bob.

He paused at the sound which came from downstairs through the half-opened door. It couldn't be in Ken's office, for he had gone to Atlanta with Mrs. Tucker that morning. It sounded like crying—as one would cry who had suffered some great bereavement or terrible misfortune. He went out in the hall and leaned over the balustrade, the better to find out what was the matter.

It was Mamie and his mother. He looked puzzled, for he could think of nothing to make Mamie cry that way. His mother was trying to soothe and calm her as Mamie told her the cause of her weeping. Bob crept down the stairs as softly as he could to hear.

Mamie between sobs was telling her mother of some accident that had befallen her.

"I had been—to Ewing's Store—and that Jim Archer—and Charley Allen—and two or three other white boys—that hang around Ewing's Store—said nasty things to me—when I came out—I hurried home—they must have followed me—"

Here she broke down again while her mother crooned softly to her, pleading with her not to cry so hard. Mamie choked back her sobs and went on. Bob's face became terrible to see. He hung there on the steps almost breathless, waiting, and dreading what he felt was coming.

"At that old field—near the railroad—they jumped out—and grabbed me—oh, my God! My God! Why didn't they kill me? Why didn't they kill me?" Mamie's screams were horrible to hear. "Then—oh, God! God help me!"

For a minute Bob stood there as one frozen to the spot. Then a blind unreasoning fury filled him. He ran up the stairs to Kenneth's room and got the revolver he knew Kenneth kept there. Without hat or coat he ran down the stairs. Out the door and down the street. Mamie and her mother were roused by his action. Mamie, lying on the floor with her head in her mother's lap, her clothes torn and bloody, her face and body bruised, struggled to her feet. She ran to the open door through which Bob had disappeared. An even greater terror, if such was possible, was on her face.

"Bob! Bob! Come back! Come back!" she cried in ever louder cries.

"Bob! Bob!"

But Bob was too far away to hear her.

In front of Ewing's Store there sat a group of nine or ten men and boys. They were gathered around one who seemed to be relating a highly interesting and humorous story. Every few minutes there'd be a loud laugh and a slapping of each other on the back. Suddenly, silence. A

hatless and coatless figure was running down the street toward them. The group opened as its members started to scatter. In the middle of it there stood Jim Archer and Charley Allen. The former had been telling the story.

Bob walked straight up to Jim Archer, whose face had turned even paler than its usual pasty color. He turned to run but it was too late. Without saying a word, his eyes burning with a deadly hatred, Bob raised the revolver he had in his hand and fired once—twice—into Archer's breast. Charley Allen rushed upon Bob to overpower him. He met head-on the two bullets that came to meet him, and fell gasping and coughing on the ground at Bob's feet.

The rest of the crowd had fled.

Without hurrying, Bob stepped into a Ford delivery truck that had been left at the curb, its engine running. Before the crowd which with miraculous suddenness filled the street could stop him, he drove straight down Lee Street, turned into Oglethorpe Avenue, and headed for the country beyond the town. . . .

Three miles out of town the Ford spluttered, coughed, shook mightily, and stopped. Its gasoline tank was empty. Shoving it into the underbrush, on the side of the road, far enough to be out of sight, Bob ran on. If he could only get across country as far as the railroad going North, he might be able to get to Macon, where he could hide. When the excitement died down, he could go on farther North. Perhaps he could eventually reach Canada. He fought his way through brush, across vast fields of cotton that seemed to have no end. Near midnight he could go no farther. He had eaten nothing since breakfast—he had been too excited over his packing to eat any dinner. Bitterly he thought of the change a few hours had brought forth. Twelve hours before, he had been eagerly planning to leave for school. Now, his sister ruined, he a murderer twice over—fleeing for his life! He hoped that he had killed both of them! It would be too ironical a fate for

them to live. . . . He thought for a moment of what would happen if they caught him. He put the thought away from him. God, that was too terrible! Mustn't think of that!—I'll lose my nerve. . . .

What was that? Lord, he must have fallen asleep! What is that? Dogs? Bloodhounds! Great God! I must get away! How did they get away from bloodhounds in books? That was it! Water! He'd find a stream and wade in it. Then the damned dogs would lose the scent.

The thought of water reminded him suddenly that he was thirsty—terribly thirsty. God, but his throat was dry! Felt like ten thousand hot needles were sticking in it!

His legs and thighs ached. He dragged them along like a paralyzed man. He thought petulantly of a paralyzed man he had seen once in Atlanta. What was his name? Bill? No, that wasn't it. Jim? No, not that either. Some sort of a name like that.

Wonder how Mamie was? Mamie? Who's Mamie? What had happened to her? He racked his brain to remember. At last he gave it up. No use trying. Old—old—brain don't work right. Wonder what's the matter with it?

His delirious brain was suddenly cleared by an ominous baying close at hand. Those damned dogs again. They'd never take him alive! He felt in his pockets to see if the gun was still there. It was. He felt in the other pocket to count the cartridges there while he ran. One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight! All there! Seven for the mob! One—for—Bob!

An old barn suddenly loomed up before him in the rapidly approaching light of dawn. He dragged himself into it and barred the door. Not much protection! But—a little! Just a little! Better'n none! He sat down on an old box by the door. There was a knot-hole farther over. He dragged the box in front of it. Reloaded the revolver. One—two—three—four—cartridges! Two that hadn't been used! That left six in the gun! And four more!

Listen! The dogs sound like they're near! There they

are! He wouldn't waste his precious bullets on dogs! Oh, no! He'd save them for the human dogs! God damn 'em! He'd show 'em a "damned nigger" knew how to die! Like a man!

Here they come! God, but it was tough to have to die! Just when life seemed so sweet! Wonder who'd sit in his seat at Harvard! Hope a colored boy'd get it! Harvard seemed so far away from where he was! Hope looked like it was as far's the moon! Might as well be for him!

Look at 'em spreading out! Whyn't they come up like men and get him? There's Jim Archer's brother! Bang! Got him! Look at 'im squirm! That's two Archers won't run after colored girls any more! Bang! Damn it, I missed 'im! Can't waste 'em like that! Got to be more careful! Must take better aim next time! Bang! Bang! Hell, I missed again! Nope! Got one of 'em!

One—two—three—four gone! Six left! Five for the "Crackers"! One for me! Bang! Bang! Got another! Must reload! One—two—three—four! Nearly all gone! Five—ten—fifteen minutes to live! Why did they pick on Mamie? Whyn't they take one of those girls that live in those houses on Butler Street? That's always running around after men? Why'd they bother a nice girl like Mamie?

Bang! Listen at 'im howl? That's music for you! Listen to the damn "Pack" squalling! What's th' matter? Looks like they've gone! Wonder if I can make a run for it? Th' damn cowards! Fifty—one hundred—a thousand—five thousand—to one! That's the way "Crackers" always fight colored folks! Never heard yet of one "Cracker" fighting one Negro! Have to have thousan' to kill one little fellow like Bob Harper!

Smoke? Can't be smoke! Yes, it is! Goin' t' burn me up! Bang! Bang! Got one of 'em!

My God! Only one bullet left! Never take him alive! Lynch him! Might burn him! Burned colored boy last month 'n Texas! Better not let 'em get him! Good-by, everybody! Good-by! Good-by! Good—Bang. . . .

It was some time after Bob had died before the posse dared enter the barn which by this time was burning rapidly. They feared the cessation of firing was only a ruse to draw them into the open. At last, after riddling the burning structure with bullets, a few of the more daring cautiously approached the barn, entered, and found Bob's body. After the bullet from his own gun had entered his head, killing him instantly, his body had fallen backwards from the box on which he had been sitting. His legs were resting on the box, his thighs vertical, his body on the floor and his head slightly tilted forward as it rested against a cow-stall. His arms were widespread. The empty revolver lay some ten feet away, where he had flung it as he fell backwards. His face was peaceful. On it was a sardonic smile as though he laughed in death at cheating the howling pack of the satisfaction of killing him.

The mob dragged the body hastily into the open. The roof of the old barn was about to fall in. Before dragging it forth, they had taken no chances. A hundred shots were fired into the dead body. Partly in anger at being cheated of the joy of killing him themselves. They tied it to the rear axle of a Ford. Howling, shouting gleefully, the voice of the pack after the kill, they drove rapidly back to town, the dead body, riddled and torn, bumping grotesquely over the holes in the road. . . .

Back to the public square, in the open space before the Confederate Monument, wood and excelsior had been piled. Near by stood cans of kerosene. On the crude pyre they threw the body. Saturated it and the wood with oil. A match applied. In the early morning sunlight the fire leaped higher and higher. Mingled with the flames and smoke the exulting cries of those who had done their duty —they had avenged and upheld white civilization. . . .

The flames died down. Women, tiny boys and girls, old men and young, stood by, a strange light on their faces. They sniffed eagerly the odor of burning human flesh which was becoming more and more faint.

. . . Into the dying flames darted a boy of twelve. Out he came, laughing hoarsely, triumphantly exhibiting a charred bone he had secured, blackened and crisp. . . . Another rushed in. . . . Another. . . . Another. . . . Here a rib. . . . There an armbone. . . . A louder cry. . . . The skull. . . . Good boy! Johnny! . . . We'll put that on the mantelpiece at home. . . . Five dollars for it, Johnny! . . . Nothin' doin'! . . . Goin' to keep it myself! . . .

The show ended. The crowd dispersed. Home to breakfast.

THE DARK PRINCESS

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

MATTHEW sat in the dining room of the Princess von Lutzower Ufer. Looking about, his heart swelled. For the first time since he had left New York, he felt himself a man, one of those who could help build a world and guide it. He had no regrets. Medicine seemed a far-off, dry-as-dust thing.

The oak paneling of the room went to the ceiling and there broke softly with carven light against white flowers and into long lucent curves. The table below was sheer with lace and linen, sparkling with silver and crystal. The servants moved deftly, and all of them were white save one who stood behind the Princess' high and crimson chair. At her right sat Matthew himself, hardly realizing until long afterward the honor thus done an almost nameless guest.

Fortunately he had the dinner jacket of year before last with him. It was not new, but it fitted his form perfectly, and his was a form worth fitting. He was a bit shocked to note that all the other men but two were in full evening dress. But he did not let this worry him much.

Ten of them sat at the table. On the Princess' left was a Japanese, faultless in dress and manner, evidently a man of importance, as the deference shown him and the orders on his breast indicated. He was quite yellow, short and stocky, with a face which was a delicately handled but perfect mask. There were two Indians, one a man grave, haughty, and old, dressed richly in turban and embroidered tunic, the other, in conventional dress and turban, a young man, handsome and alert, whose eyes were ever on the Princess. There were two Chinese, a young man

and a young woman, he in a plain but becoming Chinese costume of heavy blue silk, she in a pretty dress, half Chinese, half European in effect. An Egyptian and his wife came next, he suave, talkative, and polite—just a shade too talkative and a bit too polite, Matthew thought; his wife a big, handsome, silent woman, elegantly jeweled and gowned, with much bare flesh. Beyond them was a cold and rather stiff Arab who spoke seldom, and then abruptly.

Of the food and wine of such dinners, Matthew had read often but never partaken; and the conversation, now floating, now half submerged, gave baffling glimpses of unknown lands, spiritual and physical. It was all something quite new in his experience, the room, the table, the service, the company.

He could not keep his eyes from continually straying sidewise to his hostess. Never had he seen color in human flesh so regally set: the rich and flowing grace of the dress out of which rose so darkly splendid the jeweled flesh. The black and purple hair was heaped up on her little head, and in its depths gleamed a tiny coronet of gold. Her voice and her poise, her self-possession and air of quiet command, kept Matthew staring almost unmannerly, despite the fact that he somehow sensed a shade of resentment in the young and handsome Indian opposite.

They had eaten some delicious tidbits of meat and vegetables and then were served with a delicate soup when the Princess, turning slightly to her right, said:

"You will note, Mr. Towns, that we represent here much of the Darker World. Indeed, when all our circle is present we represent all of it, save your world of Black Folk."

"All the darker world except the darkest," said the Egyptian.

"A pretty large omission," said Matthew with a smile.

"I agree," said the Chinaman; but the Arab said something abruptly in French. Matthew had said that he knew "some" French. But his French was of the American va-

riety which one excavates from dictionaries and cements with grammar, like bricks. He was astounded at the ease and the fluency with which most of this company used languages, so easily, without groping or hesitation and with light, sure shading. They talked art in French, literature in Italian, politics in German, and everything in clear English.

"M. Ben Ali suggests," said the Princess, "that even you are not black, Mr. Towns."

"My grandfather was, and my soul is. Black blood with us in America is a matter of spirit and not simply of flesh."

"Ah! mixed blood," said the Egyptian.

"Like all of us, especially me," laughed the Princess.

"But, your Royal Highness—not Negro," said the elder Indian in a tone that hinted a protest.

"Essentially," said the Princess lightly, "as our black and curly-haired Lord Buddha testifies in a hundred places. But"—a bit impetuously—"enough of that. Our point is that Pan-Africa belongs logically with Pan-Asia; and for that reason Mr. Towns is welcomed tonight by you, I am sure, and by me especially. He did me a service as I was returning from the New Palace."

They all looked interested, but the Egyptian broke out:

"Ah, Your Highness, the New Palace, and what is the fad today? What has followed expressionism, cubism, futurism, vorticism? I confess myself at sea. Picasso alarms me. Matisse sets me aflame. But I do not understand them. I prefer the classics."

"The Congo," said the Princess, "is flooding the Acropolis. There is a beautiful Kandinsky on exhibit, and some lovely and startling things by unknown newcomers."

"Mais," replied the Egyptian, dropping into French—and they were all off to the discussion, save the silent Egyptian woman and the taciturn Arab.

Here, again, Matthew was puzzled. These persons easily penetrated worlds where he was a stranger. Frankly, but for the context he would not have known whether Picasso

was a man, a city, or a vegetable. He had never heard of Matisse. Lightly, almost carelessly, as he thought, his companions leapt to unknown subjects. Yet they knew. They knew art, books, and literature, politics of all nations, and not newspaper politics merely, but inner currents and whisperings, unpublished facts.

"Ah, pardon," said the Egyptian, returning to English, "I forgot Monsieur Towns speaks only English and does not interest himself in art."

Perhaps Matthew was sensitive and imagined that the Egyptian and the Indian rather often, if not purposely, strayed to French and subjects beyond him.

"Mr. Towns is a scientist?" asked the Japanese.

"He studies Medicine," answered the Princess.

"Ah—a high service," said the Japanese. "I was reading only today of the work on cancer by your Peyton Rous in Carrel's laboratory."

Towns was surprised. "What, has he discovered the etiological factor? I had not heard."

"Not, not yet, but he's a step nearer."

For a few moments Matthew was talking eagerly, until a babble of unknown tongues interrupted him across the table.

"Proust is dead, that 'snob of humor'—yes, but his *Recherche du Temps Perdu* is finished and will be published in full. I have only glanced at parts of it. Do you know Gasquet's *Hymnes?"*

"Beraud gets the Prix Goncourt this year. Last year it was the Negro Maran—"

"I have been reading Croce's *Æsthetic* lately—"

"Yes, I saw the Meyerhold theater in Moscow—gaunt realism—*Howl China* was tremendous."

Then easily, after the crisp brown fowl, the Princess tactfully steered them back to the subject which some seemed willing to avoid.

"And so," she said, "the darker peoples who are dissatisfied—"

She looked at the Japanese and paused as though inviting comment. He bowed courteously.

"If I may presume, your Royal Highness, to suggest," he said slowly, "the two categories are not synonymous. We ourselves know no line of color. Some of us are white, some yellow, some black. Rather, is it not, Your Highness, that we have from time to time taken counsel with the oppressed peoples of the world, many of whom by chance are colored?"

"True, true," said the Princess.

"And yet," said the Chinese lady, "it is dominating Europe which has flung this challenge of the color line, and we cannot avoid it."

"And on either count," said Matthew, "whether we be bound by oppression or by color, surely we Negroes belong in the foremost ranks."

There was a slight pause, a sort of hesitation, and it seemed to Matthew as though all expected the Japanese to speak. He did, slowly and gravely:

"It would be unfair to our guest not to explain with some clarity and precision that the whole question of the Negro race both in Africa and in America is for us not simply a question of suffering and compassion. Need we say that for these peoples we have every human sympathy? But for us here and for the larger company we represent, there is a deeper question—that of the ability, qualifications, and real possibilities of the black race in Africa or elsewhere."

Matthew left the piquant salad and laid down his fork slowly. Up to this moment he had been quite happy. Despite the feeling of being out of it now and then, he had assumed that this was his world, his people, from the high and beautiful lady whom he worshiped more and more, even to the Egyptians, Indians, and Arab who seemed slightly, but very slightly, aloof or misunderstanding.

Suddenly now there loomed plain and clear the shadow

of a color line within a color line, a prejudice within prejudice, and he and his again the sacrifice. His eyes became somber and did not lighten even when the Princess spoke.

"I cannot see that it makes great difference what ability Negroes have. Oppression is oppression. It is our privilege to relieve it."

"Yes," answered the Japanese, "but who will do it? Who can do it but those superior races whose necks now bear the yoke of the inferior rabble of Europe?"

"This," said the Princess, "I have always believed; but as I have told your Excellency, I have received impressions in Moscow which have given me very serious thought—first as to our judgment of the ability of the Negro race, and second"—she paused in thought—"as to the relative ability of all classes and peoples."

Matthew stared at her, as she continued:

"You see, Moscow has reports—careful reports of the world's masses. And the report on the Negroes of America was astonishing. At the time, I doubted its truth: their education, their work, their property, their organizations; and the odds, the terrible, crushing odds against which, inch by inch and heartbreak by heartbreak, they have forged their unfaltering way upward. If the report is true, they are a nation today, a modern nation worthy to stand beside any nation here."

"But can we put any faith in Moscow?" asked the Egyptian. "Are we not keeping dangerous company and leaning on broken reeds?"

"Well," said Matthew, "if they are as sound in everything as in this report from America, they'll bear listening to."

The young Indian spoke gently and evenly, but with bright eyes.

"Naturally," he said, "one can see Mr. Towns needs must agree with the Bolshevik estimate of the lower classes."

Matthew felt the slight slur and winced. He thought he saw the lips of the Princess tighten ever so little. He started to answer quickly, with aplomb if not actual swagger.

"I reckon," he began—then something changed within him. It was as if he had faced and made a decision, as though some great voice, crying and reverberating within his soul, spoke for him and yet was him. He had started to say, "I reckon there's as much high-born blood among American Negroes as among any people. We've had our kings, presidents, and judges—" He started to say this, but he did not finish. He found himself saying quite calmly and with slightly lifted chin:

"I reckon you're right. We American blacks are very common people. My grandfather was a whipped and driven slave; my father was never really free and died in jail. My mother plows and washes for a living. We come out of the depths—the blood and mud of battle. And from just such depths, I take it, came most of the worth-while things in this old world. If they didn't—God help us."

The table was very still, save for the very faint clink of china as the servants brought in the creamed and iced fruit.

The Princess turned, and he could feel her dark eyes full upon him.

"I wonder—I wonder," she murmured, almost catching her breath.

The Indian frowned. The Japanese smiled, and the Egyptian whispered to the Arab.

"I believe that is true," said the Chinese lady thoughtfully, "and if it is, this world is glorious."

"And if it is not?" asked the Egyptian icily.

"It is perhaps both true and untrue," the Japanese suggested. "Certainly Mr. Towns has expressed a fine and human hope, although I fear that always blood must tell."

"No, it mustn't," cried Matthew, "unless it is allowed to talk. Its speech is accidental today. There is some weak,

thin stuff called blood, which not even a crown can make speak intelligently; and at the same time some of the noblest blood God ever made is dumb with chains and poverty."

The elder Indian straightened, with blazing eyes.

"Surely," he said, slowly and calmly, "surely the gentleman does not mean to reflect on royal blood?"

Matthew started, flushed darkly, and glanced quickly at the Princess. She smiled and said lightly, "Certainly not," and then with a pause and a look straight across the table to the turban and tunic, "nor will royal blood offer insult to him." The Indian bowed to the tablecloth and was silent.

As they rose and sauntered out to coffee in the silk and golden drawing room, there was a discussion, started, of course, by the Egyptian, first of the style of the elaborate piano case and then of Schonberg's new and unobtrusive transcription of Bach's triumphant choral Prelude, "Komm, Gott, Schopfer."

The Princess sat down. Matthew could not take his eyes from her. Her fingers idly caressed the keys as her tiny feet sought the pedals. From white, pearl-embroidered slippers, her young limbs, smooth in pale, dull silk, swept up in long, low lines. Even the delicate curving of her knees he saw as she drew aside her drapery and struck the first warm tones. She played the phrase in dispute—great chords of aspiration and vision that melted to soft melody. The Egyptian acknowledged his fault. "Yes—yes, that was the theme I had forgotten."

Again Matthew felt his lack of culture audible, and not simply of his own culture, but of all the culture in white America which he had unconsciously and foolishly, as he now realized, made his norm. Yet withal Matthew was not unhappy. If he was a bit out of it, if he sensed divided counsels and opposition, yet he still felt almost fiercely that that was his world. Here were culture, wealth, and beauty. Here was power, and here he had some recognized part.

God! If he could just do his part, any part! And he waited impatiently for the real talk to begin again.

It began and lasted until after midnight. It started on lines so familiar to Matthew that he had to shut his eyes and stare again at their swarthy faces: Superior races—the right to rule—born to command—inferior breeds—the lower classes—the rabble. How the Egyptian rolled off his tongue his contempt for the "r-r-rabble"! How contemptuous was the young Indian of inferior races! But how humorous it was to Matthew to see all tables turned; the rabble now was the white workers of Europe; the inferior races were the ruling whites of Europe and America. The superior races were yellow and brown.

"You see," said the Japanese, "Mr. Towns, we here are all agreed and not agreed. We are agreed that the present white hegemony of the world is nonsense; that the darker peoples are the best—the natural aristocracy, the makers of art, religion, philosophy, life, everything except brazen machines."

"But why?"

"Because of the longer rôle of natural aristocracy among us. We count our millenniums of history where Europe counts her centuries. We have our own carefully thought-out philosophy and civilization, while Europe has sought to adopt an ill-fitting mélange of the cultures of the world."

"But does this not all come out the same gate, with the majority of mankind serving the minority? And if this is the only ideal of civilization does the tint of a skin matter in the question of who leads?" Thus Matthew summed it up.

"Not a whit—it is the natural inborn superiority that matters," said the Japanese, "and it is that which the present color bar of Europe is holding back."

"And what guarantees, in the future more than in the past and with colored more than with white, the wise rule of the gifted and powerful?"

"Self-interest and the inclusion in their ranks of all

really superior men of all colors—the best of Asia together with the best of the British aristocracy, of the German Adel, of the French writers and financiers—of the rulers, artists, and poets of all peoples."

"And suppose we found that ability and talent and art is not entirely or even mainly among the reigning aristocrats of Asia and Europe, but buried among millions of men down in the great sodden masses of all men and even in Black Africa?"

"It would come forth."

"Would it?"

"Yes," said the Princess, "it would come forth, but when and how? In slow and tenderly nourished efflorescence, or in wild and bloody upheaval with all that bitter loss?"

"Pah!" blurted the Egyptian. "Pardon, Royal Highness but what art ever came from the canaille!"

The blood rushed to Matthew's face. He threw back his head and closed his eyes, and with the movement he heard again the Great Song. He saw his father in the old log church by the river, leading the moaning singers in the Great Song of Emancipation. Clearly, plainly he heard that mighty voice and saw the rhythmic swing and beat of the thick brown arm. Matthew swung his arm and beat the table; the silver tinkled. Silence dropped on all, and suddenly Matthew found himself singing. His voice full, untrained, but mellow, quivered down the first plaintive bar.

When Israel was in Egypt land—

Then it gathered depth:

Let my people go!

He forgot his audience and saw only the shining river and the bowed, shouting throng:

Oppressed so hard, they could not stand,
Let my people go.

Then Matthew let go restraint and sang as his people sang in Virginia, seventy years ago. His great voice, gathered in one long deep breath, rolled the Call of God:

> Go down, Moses!
> Way down into the Egypt land,
> Tell Old Pharaoh
> To let my people go!

He stopped as quickly as he had begun, ashamed, and beads of sweat gathered on his forehead. Still there was silence—silence almost breathless. The voice of the Chinese woman broke it.

"It was an American slave song! I know it. How—how wonderful!"

A chorus of approval poured out, led by the Egyptian.

"That," said Matthew, "came out of the black rabble of America." And he trilled his "r." They all smiled as the tension broke.

"You assume then," said the Princess at last, "that the mass of workers of the world can rule as well as be ruled?"

"Yes—or rather can work as well as be worked, can live as well as be kept alive. America is teaching the world one thing and only one thing of real value, and that is, that ability and capacity for culture is not the hereditary monopoly of a few, but the widespread possibility for the majority of mankind if they only have a decent chance in life."

The Chinaman spoke: "If Mr. Towns' assumption is true, and I believe it is, and recognized, as sometime it must be, it will revolutionize the world."

"It will revolutionize the world," smiled the Japanese, "but not today!"

"Nor this *siècle,*" growled the Arab.

"Nor the next—and so in *sæcula sæculorum,*" laughed the Egyptian.

"Well," said the little Chinese lady, "the unexpected happens."

And Matthew added ruefully, "It's about all that does happen!"

He lapsed into blank silence, wondering how he had come to express the astonishing philosophy which had leapt unpremeditated from his lips. Did he himself believe it? As they arose from the table the Princess called him aside.

THERE IS CONFUSION

By JESSIE FAUSET

THE District Line Theater was jammed every night now. People came from all over New York and all its suburbs to see the new dancer—Joanna Marshall. Her success and fame were instant. The newspapers featured her, the "colyumists" wrote her up, her face appeared with other members of the cast, but never alone, on the billboards outside the little ramshackle theater. Special writers came to see her, took snapshots of herself and of Sylvia which they never published, and speculated on the amount of white blood which she had in her veins.

Mr. Hale had taken her on in May. The piece ran all summer with Joanna as the great attraction, although not the acknowledged star. Miss Ashby, the girl who danced as an Indian and as an American, was that. From the first she had resented the colored girl's success and had held jealously to all her rights and privileges. But the public, surprisingly loyal to this new and original plaything, never varied in the expression of the enjoyment of Joanna. Now that her changed contract was again about to expire, Miss Ashby announced her inability to remain with the play.

"I've really been violating my principles in staying this long," she told Mr. Hale with meaning.

Even Miss Sharples was overcome at this news. Joanna could be cast without any difficulty as an Indian, a wig and grease paint would accomplish that. But Joanna could hardly pose as a white American. She was too dark.

Sylvia had a suggestion here. "America" was supposed to come on last as a regal, symbolic figure, but Miss Ashby

had paid more attention to the dancing than to the symbolism.

"Why not," asked Sylvia, "have a mask made for Joanna? She could then be made as typically American as anyone could wish and no one need know the difference."

That was the basis on which Mr. Hale worked. On the first night on which the new "America" was introduced, an inveterate theater-goer in the first row of the orchestra insisted on encoring her. Joanna returned, bowed and bowed, was encored.

Somehow the habitué guessed the truth. "Pull off your mask, America," he shouted. The house took it up. "Let's see your face, America!"

Mr. Hale, Miss Sharples, Francis, Miss Rosen and Miss Phelps held a hurried consultation behind the scenes. "There's nothing to be done," Hale said, "quick, off with your mask, Miss Marshall." And breathless, somewhat with the air of a man bracing himself, he led Joanna again on the stage.

There was a moment's silence, a moment's tenseness. Then Joanna smiled and spoke. "I hardly need to tell you that there is no one in the audience more American than I am. My great-grandfather fought in the Revolution, my uncle fought in the Civil War and my brother is 'over there' now."

Perhaps it would not have succeeded anywhere else but in New York, and perhaps not even there but in Greenwich Village, but the tightly packed audience took up the applause again and Joanna was a star.

The very next week Mr. Hale moved the production to Broadway.

Joanna found herself becoming a sensation. Through Miss Sharples, who was besieged with requests to meet her protégée, she came in contact with groups of writers, dramatists, "thinkers," that vast, friendly, changing kaleidoscope of New York dwellers who take their mental life seriously. Occasionally, too, she was invited to grace

an "occasion," an afternoon at the house of a rich society woman. Once at one of these affairs she met Vera Manning, who grinned at her impishly and announced to the room that she and Miss Marshall were old friends. They had been schoolmates.

"When I was a child," said Vera impudently, "my mother sent me to public school for almost a year. She said she wanted me to be a real democrat."

She threw Joanna a droll look. When the afternoon was over, Vera asked her to go on to tea with her.

Joanna was perfect: "That's very kind of you, Miss Manning, and I don't know but what I will. There are several things I'd like to interest you in. When I think of the illimitable power for good which you white people possess—"

Once outside the door the two girls went off into gusts of inextinguishable laughter.

Joanna did not like these affairs and soon she adopted the habit of refusing such invitations. She preferred Miss Sharples' artist friends—because among them she sensed attempts, more or less tentative perhaps, toward reality. True, paradoxically enough, it was a reality based on art, rather than on living. But the girl was beginning to feel the need of something with which to fill her life. Whether her disastrous love affair, or the frequent discouragements with which she met, had changed or reshaped her vision she did not know. But life, she began to realize, was not a matter of sufficient raiment, food, or even success. There must be something more filling, more insistent, more permeating—the sort of thing that left no room for boredom or introspection.

For in spite of her vogue, her unbelievably decided success, Joanna frequently tasted the depths of ennui. She saw life as a ghastly skeleton and herself feverishly trying to cover up its bare bones with the garish trappings of her art, her lessons, her practice, her press-clippings.

Miss Sharples put her up for membership in a club

whose members were mostly people that "did" something. And Joanna fell in the habit of taking her lunch and frequently her dinner, too, at this club, just to lose herself in the atmosphere which she found there.

Undoubtedly the contact did her good. Joanna, while lacking Peter's singularly active dislike for white people, was not, on the other hand, a "good mixer." Following the natural reaction at this time of her racial group, she had tended to seek all her ideals among colored people and where these were lacking to create them for herself. As a result of this attitude, injurious in the long run to both whites and blacks, she was hardening into a singularly narrow, even though self-reliant egocentric. She had never met in her family with much opposition to her chosen career, but then neither with the exception of Joel's and that of her teacher's had she met with much coöperation.

Now to her astonishment she found herself in a setting where people, without being considered "different," "highbrow," "affected,"—and not greatly caring if they were—talked, breathed, lived for and submerged themselves and others, too, in their calling. She met girls not as old as she, who had already "arrived" in their chosen profession; incredibly young editors, artists—exponents of new and inexplicable schools of drawing,—women with causes,—birth control,—single tax, psychiatry,—teachers of dancing, radical high school teachers.

There were men to be met, too, really eminent men, but Joanna was not much interested. Following the American idea, she had been too carefully trained to care for the company of white men. Between them and herself the barrier was too impassable. Besides, it was women who had the real difficulties to overcome, disabilities of sex and of traditions.

For a while she was puzzled, a little ashamed when she realized that so many of these women had outstripped her so early; some of them were poor, some had responsibilities. There were not many of these last. It was a long time

before the solution occurred to her and when it did the result was her first real rebellion against the stupidity of prejudice.

These women had not been compelled to endure her long, heartrending struggle against color. Those who had had means had been able to plunge immediately into the sea of preparation; they had had their choice of teachers; as soon as they were equipped they had been able to approach the guardians of literary and artistic portals. Joanna thought of her many futile efforts with Bertuily and sighed at the pity of it all. Sometimes she felt like a battle-scarred veteran among all these successful, happy, chattering people, who, no matter how seriously, how deeply, they took their success, yet never regarded it with the same degree of wonder, almost of awe with which she regarded hers.

She realized for the first time how completely colored Americans were mere onlookers at the possibilities of life. She spent a few happy months with these people; they made pleasant and stimulating company for her; she herself suspected that she had made good "copy" for some of them. They were for the most part unconscious of race, not at all inclined to patronize, and generous with praise and suggestion. One woman, it is true, told Joanna that she had always liked colored people.

"My father would insist on having colored servants. He preferred them."

Joanna had made an impish reply. "My father employs both white and colored servants. But he prefers the colored ones. However, it doesn't make any difference to me."

Still that had been a race encounter. Life on the whole smiled on her. Yet she was not happy. But is anybody so? she wondered. She had forgotten to sorrow for her break with Peter, her life was too full for that, even for a new love. Vera Manning's brother Tom, brought into her entourage by the flood of publicity and popularity that engulfed her, asked her to marry him. She liked him;

found him charming and sympathetic, but he was too white and she did not want a marriage which would keep the difficulties of color more than ever before her eyes. What she did want, she decided, was to be needed, to be useful, to be devoting her time, her concentration and her remarkable single-mindedness to some worthy visible end. After all, she had worked hard and striven tremendously —to be what? A dancer.

"Is this really what you wanted me to be?" she asked her father abruptly. They were driving home from the theater, their nightly custom. "Is this your idea of real greatness?"

And Joel, his voice half glad, half sorry, told her that he, too, had hoped for something different.

. . . . . .

At first the war presented itself to Peter in a purely personal aspect. It was a long time before he envisaged the struggle as a great stupendous whole. Boyishly egotistic, he saw it simply as the next big moment in the panorama of his life following on his break with Joanna and his puzzling relationship with Maggie. And always he saw it in relation to the things which were happening to him like a series of living pictures against a great impersonal background.

Ignorant of Neal's attack on Maggie he had returned to Philadelphia, completed his work, and had gone to Des Moines. He sent his books to his Aunt Susan,—all but one little black Testament which bore written on the fly leaf his father's and grandfather's and *his* father's names. There was another name, too, "Judy Bye." But Peter could not recall this.

"More ancestors," he said to himself, thinking ruefully of Maggie. He could not bear to think of their last talk; even the thought of his forgotten instruments could not induce him to write to her.

In Des Moines he had met Philip. And from that meet-

ing resulted that first indelible picture. He had rushed forward to Philip, his hand outstretched.

"Marshall! Say, fellow, this is really great!"

He could hear his voice ringing even now. And then Philip's contemptuous rejoinder: "I don't shake hands with any such damned light of love."

He thought he must have misunderstood at first. But there was the angry scorn in Philip's eyes and there was his hand hanging clenched by his side.

The contemptuous epithet made him flinch. Of course, Philip's bitterness and scorn arose from two sources. Peter had broken off with his sister and had taken up with the one girl in whom he had ever shown any interest.

"But hang it all," Peter said to himself in angry bewilderment, "why didn't he try for Maggie himself, if he wanted her? But no, first he lets that gambler win her and then he leaves her to me."

Here again ignorance was the cause. Philip did not know of Maggie's divorce until she had become engaged to Peter. Joanna had never told him and he, considering her first marriage as an answer to his rather lackadaisical courtship, had not thought it worth while to make inquiries about her. His own liking for Maggie had taken possession of him so slowly that he had not realized himself until too late what she meant to him.

The result of the encounter was to drive Peter back on himself and to confuse his issues more and more. He did not know which way to turn. More than ever if Philip loved Maggie, he himself wanted to be freed of his obligations, from prejudice, from too lofty idealism. It seemed to him as though the last two years of his life had been spent in struggling to reconcile ideals. First his efforts to win Joanna and then his need to get away from Maggie. He went through the motions of the long days of drill and preparation, thinking incoherent, unrelated thoughts.

"Poor Maggie, I've got her into this. I can't just chuck her." Responsibility began feebly to awaken within him.

"But what does she see in me? Yet she'll die if I leave her. Joanna, you've messed up all our lives. Oh, damn all women! I hope to God I get killed in France!"

Still in a dream he left Des Moines for Camp Upton and left the camp for overseas. He was a good sailor and therefore was free to devote himself to men who were less fortunate than himself. On an afternoon he came on deck with Harley Alexander. The two had become "buddies" in the camp and now on the trip over the long days of inaction were awakening one of those strange intensive friendships between two people, in which each tries to bare his heart to the utmost before the other. Harley had told Peter about his disastrous courtship of Vera Manning and Peter had, reluctantly, inevitably returned the confidence.

"Well," said Harley, "I'll be doggone. I suppose Joanna did use to queen it over you, but what'd you go make a door-mat of yourself for? She gave you what you were biddin' for. But now as far as this Miss Ellersley's concerned—I can't seem to remember her, Peter—she's got no claim on you that I can see. If she's any sense at all she knows that you came to her on sheer impulse. If you don't love her, don't you marry her. You'll regret it all your life if you do. Gee, I'm sick of this boat. Don't you s'pose we're ever really goin' to get into this man's war?"

He lurched suddenly and violently against Peter, who dragged him to the rail where he became horribly and thoroughly seasick. There he remained, spent and helpless. Peter tried to drag him back to a steamer chair, but he was too much in a state of collapse to help himself and too heavy for Peter to drag across the deck. A white officer, a lieutenant whom Peter had noticed infrequently sitting near the door, was standing looking gravely on. He came forward.

"Here, let me help you." Together the two men got Alexander into the chair. He was the type with whom any

physical indisposition goes hard. Peter noticed he was shivering.

"Wait, I'll get a rug," he said, starting toward the door. Alexander groaned, "Bye, for God's sake don't leave me. I'm as weak as a cat."

"Oh, you'll be all right," Peter called back, and left him with the white lieutenant standing silently by.

Shortly after his return Harley, declaring himself much better, went below to his room. But first he thanked the lieutenant who bowed with his pleasantly grave air. Peter, about to sink into the vacant seat, looked up and caught the intent glance of the white officer who smiled and nodded and came leisurely toward him.

"May I sit beside you a moment?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes," Peter replied shortly. He thought: "I know what you make me think of. Of myself that first day I put on my uniform. Now why?" It was true that while there was no facial resemblance, the two men were built almost exactly alike, tall, with broad shoulders, flat backs and lean thighs. Peter was at first glance the more comely, his head was more shapely and his hair so crisply curling gave him a certain persistent boyishness. The other man, a little older and plainer, had nevertheless a certain whimsical melancholy about his eyes and mouth which attracted Peter.

"I heard your friend call you Bye," he said still pleasantly. Peter nodded briefly. "That's my name, too. Bye, Meriwether Bye. I was wondering where you came from."

Meriwether Bye! Peter felt his face growing hot as he remembered the circumstances in which he had last heard that name. "Dr. Meriwether Bye of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, I suppose."

Meriwether without surprise acknowledged this. "You know of me then. May I ask how?"

"I've always known of you indirectly," Peter told him coldly. "My great-grandfather spent all his life working for yours for nothing. There was a black Meriwether Bye,

my father, named after him, though I'm sure," he added with rude inconsequence, "I can't imagine why."

Meriwether looked at him with a sort of gentle understanding. "I've often wondered about those black Byes," he said musingly. "My grandfather Dr. Meriwether Bye—he's an old, old man now—used to tell me about them. He was very fond of one of them, Isaiah Bye. Isn't it strange that we, the grandsons of those two men, friends way back in those days, should be meeting here on our way to France to fight for our country?"

Something, some aching tiger of resentment and dislike, which always crouched in Peter ready to spring at the approach of a white man, lay down momentarily appeased.

"Friends! Say, that's the first time I ever heard a white man speak that way of the relation between a slave-owner and his slave. You can't guess," he said abruptly, "how I first heard of you." And he told Meriwether of his experience with Mrs. Lea, while the doctor watched him with keen, melancholy eyes.

"I'll wager you were angry, mad clear through and through. You had a right to be. Mrs. Lea," as he pronounced her name his gentle voice grew a little gentler, Peter thought, "didn't realize what she was saying. She's like many another of us, totally unaware of our shame and your merits. I hope this war will teach us something."

He had a nice way with him. "A regular fellow," Peter thought, listening to his quiet, unaffected disquisition on many subjects. He had been literally everywhere, even to Greenland, and had seen all sorts of people. He had a theory that while not all individuals were equal, all races averaged the same. Some men were bound to be superior.

"And the differences between the races are a matter of relativity," he finished. "I confess my own interest in colored people is very keen." He raised a fine hand to disparage Peter's slight movement. "Yes, I know you are sick of that and the patronage it implies. But I mean it, Bye, and when you get back home you must go out to Bryn

Mawr and see whether or not I have tried to express that interest."

"I should think"—Peter looked at him squarely—"all things considered, you or your family would have shown some interest in us black Byes. You are rich men, your family is a powerful one—"

"Was a powerful one," Meriwether interrupted him. He had flushed a little. "I suppose you know that my great-grandfather, Aaron Bye, had ten sons. But only four of them had sons and all of them except my father died in the Civil War. Isn't that some compensation? My own father died when I was very young and I grew up with his father. He was the one who told me about the black Byes and how he, when a boy, used to play about Philadelphia with Isaiah. 'Proud as Isaiah Bye,' I've heard him say. Bye," said Meriwether earnestly, "I tried my best when I became a man to find if there were any of you left in Philadelphia. It seemed to me a monstrous thing to have our family and our fortune—for my grandfather is still a very rich man—reared on the backs of those other Byes." He struck the table with a vehement hand. "That whole system was barbarous."

"I wish," Peter told him, "I had known you sooner." Just to hear this expression of penitence seemed to ease the long resentment of years.

"Without those slaves," Meriwether resumed, "Aaron Bye would never have got on his feet. His father was just a poor farmer, a Quaker, running away from England to escape religious persecution. He came over and received a grant of land. But he could have done nothing without labor, and free labor at that. He and a friend bought a wretched slave between them, worked a bit of land, then that old Bye bought out the other man's share of the slave; presently he bought a woman. Ah, it's a rotten story." Peter saw melancholy like a veil settle upon his finely drawn features.

"You really feel it? I didn't suppose any white man felt like that. Well, you needn't mind about me or about any

of the black Byes," he surprised himself by saying, "After all, it isn't as though we were related. It's just the fortunes of—well, not of war—but of life."

"No," Meriwether returned, "we're not related. Thank God there's none of that unutterable mix-up. I don't think I could have forgiven those Quaker Byes that. But sometimes it seems to me that just because those black Byes and thousands of others like them had no claim, that they had every claim."

After that day they met daily; Meriwether expounding, explaining, unconsciously teaching; Peter listening and absorbing. "I'm surprised," the young white man said, giving Peter a calculating look, "that you were content being an entertainer."

Peter flushed and explained. It was only a temporary phase in his life. He had been broken-up, crazy. Haltingly he spoke of Joanna and finally of Maggie.

Meriwether thought it a bad business. "Stupid of you not to see that the first girl had your interest at heart. Why, man, by your own account she had brought you out of the butcher-shop to the University. Well, life permits these things." Bit by bit he told Peter of his own love-life. He had loved Mrs. Lea for years even before her marriage when they were boy and girl together, but her hard, uncomprehending attitude toward "lesser peoples" chilled him, really frightened him. He knew he could not live with a woman like that.

To Peter's surprise Meriwether was a fatalist. He had strong premonitions and allowed himself to be guided by them. "From the outset," he told Peter, gravely, "I knew that you meant something to me. That was why I used to watch you so closely. I used to wonder and speculate about you. Something in you made me think of myself. It was as though you, all unrelated even racially, represented something which might have been a part of myself, as though you," he said dreamily, "were living actively what I was thinking of passively. I have often tried to picture my life as

a colored man. I think if there had been any of that selfish admixture of blood between the white and black Byes and I had heard of it, I'd have gone the United States over but what I'd have found my relatives, and have claimed them, too, before all the world."

One of Meriwether's strange fantasies was that he would never return from the war. "I knew it when I came away from America. And listen, Bye, when I die"—Peter marveled at the sureness of that "when"—"I want you after you get back home to go to my grandfather and tell him who you are and how you met me. You are to give him this." He took a little case from his pocket in which were the pictures of a man and woman—old-fashioned pictures.

"Your father," Peter exclaimed involuntarily, "you can see he's a Bye—"

"And my mother," Meriwether finished. He drew a locket, suspended on a thin gold chain, from around his neck. "And take this to Mrs. Lea. She loves me," he said very simply. "Here, you might just as well take them now." Peter accepted them reluctantly.

He wished he had a picture of Joanna. Death seemed suddenly very near, very possible. He did not care if he died, but he would like Joanna to know that he thought of her. But he had nothing to leave for her. Yes, there was the Testament. He took it from his inside breast-pocket and showed it to Meriwether. Indeed he looked at it closely for the first time himself. The two heads so like, yet so different, bent over the old faded script. On the top of the page, in a beautiful clear hand, was written Aaron Bye, then underneath in crazy, drunken letters, Judy Bye.

"I can't guess who she was," said Peter.

A little below a familiar name appeared, Joshua Bye, and above it, evidently written in the same hand, Ceazer Bye. But through this entry a firm, black line was drawn, drawn with a pen that dug down into the thin paper. After Joshua's name came the names Isaiah and then Meriwether.

"My father," Peter explained, feeling somehow very near

to him. "I guess I'd better put my name in, too." He wrote it in his small compact hand. "I wonder who those two were, Judy and Ceazer," he mused, smiling a little at the quaint spelling. "I don't seem ever to have heard of them. I thought we started with Joshua." But Meriwether professed dimly to remember some mention of Judy.

"I'm sure I've heard my grandfather mention her name years ago and Ceazer's, too; he was her husband, seems to me. I suppose Aaron Bye gave them the Testament."

The little incident threw them into a deeper intimacy. Meriwether professed himself to be as interested in and as bewildered at the workings of the color question as Peter himself, though naturally he lacked his new friend's bitterness.

"It is amazing into what confusion slavery threw American life," he said, launched on one of their interminable discussions. "Here America was founded for the sake of liberty and the establishment of an asylum for all who were oppressed. And no land has more actively engaged in the suppression of liberty, or in keeping down those who were already oppressed. So that a white boy raised on all sorts of high-falutin idealism finds himself when he grows up completely at sea. I confess, Bye, when I came to realize that all my wealth and all the combination of environment and position which has made life hitherto so beautiful and perfect, were founded quite specifically on the backs of broken, beaten slaves, I got a shock from which I think sometimes I'll never recover. It's robbed me of happiness forever."

"I like to hear you acknowledge your indebtedness," said Peter frankly, "but I don't think you should take on your shoulders the penitence of the whole white nation."

"No, I don't think I should, either," Meriwether returned unexpectedly, "but that sort of extremeness seems to be inherent in the question of color. Either you concern yourself with it violently as the Southerner does and so let slip by all the other important issues of life; or you are indiffer-

ent and callous like the average Northerner and grow hardened to all sorts of atrocities; or you steep yourself in it like the sentimentalist—that's my class—and find yourself paralyzed by the vastness of the problem."

He slipped into a familiar mood of melancholy brooding. It was at such a time that he spoke to Peter of his willingness, of his absolute determination to lose his life in the Great War. For this reason he had gone into the ranks instead of the medical corps where he would have been comparatively safe. "Don't think I'm a fanatic, Peter. I see this war as the greatest gesture the world has ever made for Freedom. If I can give up my life in this cause I shall feel that I have paid my debt."

THE BLACKER THE BERRY

By WALLACE THURMAN

SATURDAY evening. Alva had urged her to hurry uptown from work. He was going to take her on a party with some friends of his. This was the first time he had ever asked her to go to any sort of social affair with him. She had never met any of his friends save Braxton, who scarcely spoke to her, and never before had Alva suggested taking her to any sort of social gathering, either public or semipublic. He often took her to various motion picture theaters, both downtown and in Harlem, and at least three nights a week he would call for her at the theater and escort her to Harlem. On these occasions they often went to Chinese restaurants or to ice-cream parlors before going home. But usually they would go to City College Park, find an empty bench in a dark corner where they could sit and spoon before retiring either to her room or to Alva's.

Emma Lou had, long before this, suggested going to a dance or to a party, but Alva had always countered that he never attended such affairs during the summer months, that he stayed away from them for precisely the same reason that he stayed away from work, namely, because it was too hot. Dancing, said he, was a matter of calisthenics, and calisthenics were work. Therefore it, like any sort of physical exercise, was taboo during hot weather.

Alva sensed that sooner or later Emma Lou would become aware of his real reason for not taking her out among his friends. He realized that one as color-conscious as she appeared to be would, at some not so distant date, jump to what for him would be uncomfortable conclusions. He did not wish to risk losing her before the end of the summer, but neither could he risk taking her out among his friends,

for he knew too well that he would be derided for his unseemly preference for "dark meat," and told publicly without regard for her feelings, that "black cats must go."

Furthermore he always took Geraldine to parties and dances. Geraldine with her olive-colored skin and straight black hair. Geraldine, who of all the people he pretended to love, really inspired him emotionally as well as physically, the one person he conquested without thought of monetary gain. Yet he had to do something with Emma Lou, and release from the quandary presented itself from most unexpected quarters.

Quite accidentally, as things of the sort happen in Harlem with its complex but interdependable social structure, he had become acquainted with a young Negro writer, who had asked him to escort a group of young writers and artists to a house-rent party. Though they had heard much of this phenomenon, none had been on the inside of one, and because of their rather polished manners and exteriors, were afraid that they might not be admitted. Proletarian Negroes are as suspicious of their more sophisticated brethren as they are of white men, and resent as keenly their intrusions into their social world. Alva had consented to act as cicerone, and, realizing that these people would be more or less free from the color prejudice exhibited by his other friends, had decided to take Emma Lou along too. He was also aware of her intellectual pretensions, and felt that she would be especially pleased to meet recognized talents and outstanding personalities. She did not have to know that these were not his regular companions, and from then on she would have no reason to feel that he was ashamed to have her meet his friends.

Emma Lou could hardly attend to Arline's change of complexion and clothes between acts and scenes, so anxious was she to get to Alva's house and to the promised party. Her happiness was complete. She was certain now that Alva loved her, certain that he was not ashamed or even aware of her dusky complexion. She had felt from the first that he

was superior to such inane truck, now she knew it. Alva loved her for herself alone; and loved her so much that he didn't mind her being a coal-scuttle blonde.

Sensing something unusual, Arline told Emma Lou that she would remove her own make-up after the performance, and let her have time to get dressed for the party. This she proceeded to do all through the evening, spending much time in front of the mirror at Arline's dressing table, manicuring her nails, marcelling her hair, and applying various creams and cosmetics to her face in order to make her despised darkness less obvious. Finally, she put on one of Arline's less pretentious afternoon frocks, and set out for Alva's house.

As she approached his room door, she heard much talk and laughter, moving her to halt and speculate whether or not she should go in. Even her unusual and high-tensioned jubilance was not powerful enough to overcome immediately her shyness and fears. Suppose these friends of Alva's would not take kindly to her? Suppose they were like Braxton, who invariably curled his lip when he saw her, and seldom spoke even as much as a word of greeting? Suppose they were like the people who used to attend her mother's and grandmother's teas, club meetings and receptions, dismissing her with—"It beats me how this child of yours looks so unlike the rest of you. . . . Are you sure it isn't adopted?" Or suppose they were like the college youth she had known in Southern California? No, that couldn't be. Alva would never invite her where she would not be welcome. These were his friends. And so was Braxton, but Alva said he was peculiar. There was no danger. Alva had invited her. She was here. Anyway, she wasn't so black. Hadn't she artificially lightened her skin about four or five shades until she was almost brown? Certainly it was all right. She needn't be a foolish ninny all her life. Thus, reassured, she knocked on the door, and felt herself trembling with excitement and internal uncertainty as Alva

let her in, took her hat and coat, and proceeded to introduce her to the people in the room.

"Miss Morgan, meet Mr. Tony Crews. You've probably seen his book of poems. He's the little jazz boy, you know."

Emma Lou bashfully touched the extended hand of the curly-headed poet. She had not seen or read his book, but she had often noticed his name in the newspapers and magazines. He was all that she had expected him to be except that he had pimples on his face. These didn't fit in with her mental picture.

"Miss Morgan, this is Cora Thurston. Maybe I should'a introduced you ladies first."

"I'm no lady, and I hope you're not either, Miss Morgan." She smiled, shook Emma Lou's hand, then turned away to continue her interrupted conversation with Tony Crews.

"Miss Morgan, meet . . . ," he paused, and addressed a tall, dark-yellow youth stretched out on the floor, "What name you going by now?"

"Why, Paul, of course."

"All right then, Miss Morgan, this is Mr. Paul, he changes his name every season."

Emma Lou sought to observe this person more closely, and was shocked to see that his shirt was open at the neck and that he was sadly in need of a haircut and shave.

"Miss Morgan, meet Mr. Walter." A small, slender, dark youth with an infectious smile and small features. His face was familiar. Where had she seen him before?

"Now that you've met every one, sit down on the bed there beside Truman and have a drink. Go on with your talk, folks," he urged as he went over to the dresser to fill a glass with a milk-colored liquid. Cora Thurston spoke up in answer to Alva's adjuration:

"Guess there ain't much more to say. Makes me mad to discuss it anyhow."

"No need of getting mad at people like that," said Tony

Crews simply and softly. "I think one should laugh at such stupidity."

"And ridicule it, too," came from the luxurious person sprawled over the floor, for he did impress Emma Lou as being luxurious, despite the fact that his suit was unpressed, and that he wore neither socks nor necktie. She noticed the many graceful gestures he made with his hands, but wondered why he kept twisting his lips to one side when he talked. Perhaps he was trying to mask the size of his mouth.

Truman was speaking now, "Ridicule will do no good, nor mere laughing at them. I admit those weapons are about the only ones an intelligent person would use, but one must also admit that they are rather futile."

"Why futile?" Paul queried indolently.

"They are futile," Truman continued, "because, well, those people cannot help being like they are—their environment has made them that way."

Miss Thurston muttered something. It sounded like "hooey," then held out an empty glass. "Give me some more firewater, Alva." Alva hastened across the room and refilled her glass. Emma Lou wondered what they were talking about. Again Cora broke the silence, "You can't tell me they can't help it. They kick about white people, then commit the same crime."

There was a knock on the door, interrupting something Tony Crews was about to say. Alva went to the door.

"Hello, Ray." A tall, blond, fair-skinned youth entered. Emma Lou gasped, and was more bewildered than ever. All of this silly talk and drinking, and now—here was a white man!

"Hy, everybody. Jusas Chraust, I hope you saved me some liquor." Tony Crews held out his empty glass and said quietly, "We've had about umpteen already, so I doubt if there's any more left."

"You can't kid me, bo. I know Alva would save me a

dram or two." Having taken off his hat and coat he squatted down on the floor beside Paul.

Truman turned to Emma Lou. "Oh, Ray, meet Miss Morgan. Mr. Jorgenson, Miss Morgan."

"Glad to know you; pardon my not getting up, won't you?" Emma Lou didn't know what to say, and couldn't think of anything appropriate, but since he was smiling, she tried to smile too, and nodded her head.

"What's the big powwow?" he asked. "All of you look so serious. Haven't you had enough liquor, or are you just trying to settle the ills of the universe?"

"Neither," said Paul. "They're just damning our 'pink niggers.'"

Emma Lou was aghast. Such extraordinary people—saying "nigger" in front of a white man! Didn't they have any race pride or proper bringing up?

"What've they done now?" Ray asked, reaching out to accept the glass Alva was handing him.

"No more than they've always done," Tony Crews answered. "Cora here just felt like being indignant, because she heard of a forthcoming wedding in Brooklyn to which the prospective bride and groom have announced they will *not* invite any dark people."

"Seriously now," Truman began. Ray interrupted him.

"Who in the hell wants to be serious?"

"As I was saying," Truman continued, "you can't blame light Negroes for being prejudiced against dark ones. All of you know that white is the symbol of everything pure and good, whether that everything be concrete or abstract. Ivory Soap is advertised as being ninety-nine and some fraction per cent pure, and Ivory Soap is white. Moreover, virtue and virginity are always represented as being clothed in white garments. Then, too, the God we, or rather most Negroes worship is a patriarchal white man, seated on a white throne, in a spotless white Heaven, radiant with white streets and white-appareled angels eating white honey and drinking white milk."

"Listen to the boy rave. Give him another drink," Ray shouted, but Truman ignored him and went on:

"We are all living in a totally white world, where all standards are the standards of the white man, and where almost invariably what the white man does is right, and what the black man does is wrong, unless it is precedented by something a white man has done."

"Which," Cora added scornfully, "makes it all right for light Negroes to discriminate against dark ones?"

"Not at all," Truman objected. "It merely explains, not justifies, the evil—or rather, the fact of intraracial segregation. Mulattoes have always been accorded more consideration by white people than their darker brethren. They were made to feel superior, even during slave days . . . made to feel proud, as Bud Fisher would say, that they were bastards. It was for the mulatto offspring of white masters and Negro slaves that the first schools for Negroes were organized, and say what you will, it is generally the Negro with a quantity of mixed blood in his veins who finds adaptation to a Nordic environment more easy than one of pure blood, which, of course, you will admit, is, to an American Negro, convenient if not virtuous."

"Does that justify their snobbishness and self-evaluated superiority?"

"No, Cora, it doesn't," returned Truman. "I'm not trying to excuse them. I am merely trying to give what I believe to be an explanation of this thing. I have never been to Washington and only know what Paul and you have told me about conditions there, but they seem to be just about the same as conditions in Los Angeles, Omaha, Chicago, and other cities in which I have lived or visited. You see, people have to feel superior to something, and there is scant satisfaction in feeling superior to domestic animals or steel machines that one can train or utilize. It is much more pleasing to pick out some individual or some group of individuals on the same plane to feel superior to. This is almost necessary when one is a member of a supposedly de-

spised, mistreated minority group. Then consider that the mulatto is much nearer white than he is black, and is therefore, more liable to act like a white man than like a black one, although I cannot say that I see a great deal of difference in any of their actions. They are human beings first and only white or black incidentally."

"But you seem to forget," Tony Crews insisted, "that because a man is dark, it doesn't necessarily mean he is not of mixed blood. Now look at . . ."

"Yeah, let him look at you or at himself or at Cora," Paul interrupted. "There ain't no unmixed Negroes."

"But I haven't forgotten that," Truman said, ignoring the note of finality in Paul's voice. "I merely took it for granted that we were talking only about those Negroes who were light-skinned."

"But all light-skinned Negroes aren't color struck or color prejudiced," interjected Alva, who, up to this time, like Emma Lou, had remained silent. This was, he thought, a strategic moment for him to say something. He hoped Emma Lou would get the full significance of this statement.

"True enough," Truman began again. "But I also took it for granted that we were only talking about those who were. As I said before, Negroes are, after all, human beings, and they are subject to be influenced and controlled by the same forces and factors that influence and control other human beings. In an environment where there are so many color-prejudiced whites, there are bound to be a number of color-prejudiced blacks. Color prejudice and religion are akin in one respect. Some folks have it and some don't, and the kernel that is responsible for it is present in us all, which is to say, that potentially we are all color-prejudiced as long as we remain in this environment. For, as you know, prejudices are always caused by difference, and the majority group sets the standard. Then, too, since black is the favorite color of vaudeville comedians and jokesters, and, conversely, as intimately associated with

tragedy, it is no wonder that even the blackest individual will seek out someone more black than himself to laugh at."

"So saith the Lord," Tony answered soberly.

"And the Holy Ghost saith, let's have another drink."

"Happy thought, Ray," returned Cora. "Give us some more ice cream and gin, Alva."

Alva went into the alcove to prepare another concoction. Tony started the victrola. Truman turned to Emma Lou, who, all this while, had been sitting there with Alva's arm around her, every muscle in her body feeling as if it wanted to twitch, not knowing whether to be sad or to be angry. She couldn't comprehend all of this talk. She couldn't see how these people could sit down and so dispassionately discuss something that seemed particularly tragic to her. This fellow Truman, whom she was certain she knew, with all his hi-faluting talk, disgusted her immeasurably. She wasn't sure that they weren't all poking fun at her. Truman was speaking:

"Miss Morgan, didn't you attend school in Southern California?" Emma Lou at last realized where she had seen him before. So *this* was Truman Walter, the little "cock o' the walk," as they had called him on the campus. She answered him with difficulty, for there was a sob in her throat. "Yes, I did." Before Truman could say more to her, Ray called to him:

"Say, Bozo, what time are we going to the party? It's almost one o'clock now."

"Is it?" Alva seemed surprised. "But Aaron and Alta aren't here yet."

"They've been married just long enough to be late to everything."

"What do you say we go by and ring their bell?" Tony suggested, ignoring Paul's Greenwich Village wit.

" 'Sall right with me." Truman lifted his glass to his lips. "Then on to the house-rent party . . . on to the bawdy bowels of Beale Street!"

They drained their glasses and prepared to leave.

"Ahhhh, sock it." . . . "Ummmm" . . . Piano playing—slow, loud, and discordant, accompanied by the rhythmic sound of shuffling feet. Down a long dark hallway to an inside room, lit by a solitary red bulb. "Oh, play it, you dirty no-gooder." . . . A room full of dancing couples, scarcely moving their feet, arms completely encircling one another's bodies . . . cheeks being warmed by one another's breath . . . eyes closed . . . animal ecstasy agitating their perspiring faces. There was much panting, much hip movement, much shaking of the buttocks. . . . "Do it twice in the same place." . . . "Git off that dime." Now somebody was singing, "I ask you very confidentially. . . ." "Sing it, man, sing it." . . . Piano treble moaning, bass rumbling like thunder. A swarm of people, motivating their bodies to express in suggestive movements, the ultimate consummation of desire.

The music stopped, the room was suffocatingly hot, and Emma Lou was disturbingly dizzy. She clung fast to Alva, and let the room and its occupants whirl around her. Bodies and faces glided by. Leering faces and lewd bodies. Anxious faces and angular bodies. Sad faces and obese bodies. All mixed up together. She began to wonder how such a small room could hold so many people. "Oh, play it again. . . ." She saw the pianist now, silhouetted against the dark mahogany piano, saw him bend his long, slick-haired head, until it hung low on his chest, then lift his hands high in the air, and as quickly let them descend upon the keyboard. There was one moment of cacophony, then the long, supple fingers evolved a slow, tantalizing melody out of the deafening chaos.

Everyone began to dance again. Body called to body, and cemented themselves together, limbs lewdly intertwined. A couple there kissing, another couple dipping to the floor, and slowly shimmying, belly to belly, as they came back to an upright position. A slender dark girl with wild eyes and wilder hair stood in the center of the room, supported

by the strong, lithe arms of a longshoreman. She bent her trunk backward, until her head hung below her waistline, and all the while she kept the lower portion of her body quivering like jello.

"She whips it to a jelly," the piano player was singing now, and banging on the keys with such might that an empty gin bottle on the top of the piano seemed to be seized with the ague. "Oh, play it, Mr. Charlie." Emma Lou grew limp in Alva's arms.

"What's the matter, honey, drunk?" She couldn't answer. The music augmented by the general atmosphere of the room and the liquor she had drunk had presumably created another person in her stead. She felt like flying into an emotional frenzy—felt like flinging her arms and legs in insane unison. She had become very fluid, very elastic, and all the while she was giving in more and more to the music and to the liquor and to the physical madness of the moment.

When the music finally stopped, Alva led Emma Lou to a settee by the window which his crowd had appropriated. Everyone was exceedingly animated, but they all talked in hushed, almost revential tones.

"Isn't this marvelous?" Truman's eyes were ablaze with interest and excitement. Even Tony Crews seemed unusually alert.

"It's the greatest I've seen yet," he exclaimed.

Alva seemed the most unemotional one in the crowd, and the most detached. "Look at 'em all watching Ray."

"Remember, Bo," Truman counseled him. "To-night you're 'passing.' Here's a new wrinkle, white man 'passes' for Negro."

"Why not? Enough of you pass for white." They all laughed, then transferred their interest back to the party. Cora was speaking:

"Didya see that little girl in pink—the one with the scar on her face—dancing with that tall, lanky, one-armed man? Wasn't she throwing it up to him?"

"Yeah," Tony admitted, "but she didn't have anything on that little Mexican-looking girl. She musta been born in Cairo."

"Saay, but isn't that one bad-looking darkey over there, two chairs to the left; is he gonna smother that woman?" Truman asked excitedly.

"I'd say she kinda liked it," Paul answered, then lit another cigarette.

"Do you know they have corn liquor in the kitchen? They serve it from a coffee pot." Aaron seemed proud of his discovery.

"Yes," said Alva, "and they got hoppin'-john out there too."

"What the hell is hoppin'-john?"

"Ray, I'm ashamed of you. Here you are passing for colored and don't know what hoppin'-john is!"

"Tell him, Cora, I don't know either."

"Another one of these foreigners." Cora looked at Truman disdainfully. "Hoppin'-john is black-eyed peas and rice. Didn't they ever have any out in Salt Lake City?"

"Have they any chitterlings?" Alta asked eagerly.

"No, Alta," Alva replied, dryly. "This isn't Kansas. They have got pig's feet, though."

"Lead me to 'em," Aaron and Alta shouted in unison, and led the way to the kitchen. Emma Lou clung to Alva's arm and tried to remain behind. "Alva, I'm afraid."

"Afraid of what? Come on, snap out of it! You need another drink." He pulled her up from the settee and led her through the crowded room down the long, narrow, dark hallway to the more crowded kitchen.

When they returned to the room, the pianist was just preparing to play again. He was tall and slender with extra long legs and arms, giving him the appearance of a scarecrow. His pants were tight in the waist and full in the legs. He wore no coat, and a blue silk shirt hung damply to his body. He acted as if he were king of the occasion, ruling all from his piano stool throne. He talked familiarly to every-

one in the room, called women from other men's arms, demanded drinks from any bottle he happened to see being passed around, laughed uproariously, and made many grotesque and ofttimes obscene gestures.

There were sounds of a scuffle in an adjoining room, and an excited voice exclaimed, "You goddam son-of-a-bitch, don't you catch my dice no more." The piano player banged on the keys and drowned out the reply, if there was one.

Emma Lou could not keep her eyes off the piano player. He was acting like a maniac, occasionally turning completely around on his stool, grimacing like a witch doctor, and letting his hands dawdle over the keyboard of the piano with an agonizing indolence, when compared to the extreme exertion to which he put the rest of his body. He was improvising. The melody of the piece he had started to play was merely a base for more bawdy variations. His left foot thumped on the floor in time with the music, while his right punished the piano's loud pedal. Beads of perspiration gathered grease from his slicked-down hair, and rolled oleaginously down his face and neck, spotting the already damp baby-blue shirt, and streaking his already greasy black face with more shiny lanes.

A sailor lad suddenly ceased his impassioned hip movement and strode out of the room, pulling his partner behind him, pushing people out of the way as he went. The spontaneous moans and slangy ejaculations of the piano player and of the more articulate dancers became more regular, more like a chanted obbligato to the music. This lasted for a couple of hours, interrupted only by hectic intermissions. Then the dancers grew less violent in their movements, and though the piano player seemed never to tire there were fewer couples on the floor, and those left seemed less loath to move their legs.

Eventually, the music stopped for a long interval, and there was a more concerted drive on the kitchen's corn liquor supply. Most of the private flasks and bottles were

empty. There were more calls for food, too, and the crap game in the side room annexed more players and more kibitzers. Various men and women had disappeared altogether. Those who remained seemed worn and tired. There was much petty, person to person badinage and many whispered consultations in corners. There was an argument in the hallway between the landlord and two couples, who wished to share one room without paying him more than the regulation three dollars required of one couple. Finally, Alva suggested that they leave. Emma Lou had drifted off into a state of semi-consciousness and was too near asleep or drunk to distinguish people or voices. All she knew was that she was being led out of that dreadful place, that the perturbing "pilgrimage to the proletariat's parlor social," as Truman had called it, was ended, and that she was in a taxicab, cuddled up in Alva's arms.

QUICKSAND

By NELLA LARSEN

The day was a rainy one. Helga Crane, stretched out on her bed, felt herself so broken physically, mentally, that she had given up thinking. But back and forth in her staggered brain wavering, incoherent thoughts shot shuttle-like. Her pride would have shut out these humiliating thoughts and painful visions of herself. The effort was too great. She felt alone, isolated from all other human beings, separated even from her own anterior existence by the disaster of yesterday. Over and over, she repeated: "There's nothing left but to go now." Her anguish seemed unbearable.

For days, for weeks, voluptuous visions had haunted her. Desire had burned in her flesh with uncontrollable violence. The wish to give herself had been so intense that Dr. Anderson's surprising, trivial apology loomed as a direct refusal of the offering. Whatever outcome she had expected, it had been something else than this, this mortification, this feeling of ridicule and self-loathing, this knowledge that she had deluded herself. It was all, she told herself, as unpleasant as possible.

Almost she wished she could die. Not quite. It wasn't that she was afraid of death, which had, she thought, its picturesque aspects. It was rather that she knew she would not die. And death, after the debacle, would but intensify its absurdity. Also, it would reduce her, Helga Crane, to unimportance, to nothingness. Even in her unhappy present state, that did not appeal to her. Gradually, reluctantly, she began to know that the blow to her self-esteem, the certainty of having proved herself a silly fool, was perhaps the severest hurt which she had suffered. It was her self-

assurance that had gone down in the crash. After all, what Dr. Anderson thought didn't matter. She could escape from the discomfort of his knowing gray eyes. But she couldn't escape from sure knowledge that she had made a fool of herself. This angered her further and she struck the wall with her hands and jumped up and began hastily to dress herself. She couldn't go on with the analysis. It was too hard. Why bother, when she could add nothing to the obvious fact that she had been a fool?

"I can't stay in this room any longer. I must get out or I'll choke." Her self-knowledge had increased her anguish. Distracted, agitated, incapable of containing herself, she tore open drawers and closets, trying desperately to take some interest in the selection of her apparel.

It was evening and still raining. In the streets, unusually deserted, the electric lights cast dull glows. Helga Crane, walking rapidly, aimlessly, could decide on no definite destination. She had not thought to take umbrella or even rubbers. Rain and wind whipped cruelly about her, drenching her garments and chilling her body. Soon the foolish little satin shoes which she wore were sopping wet. Unheeding these physical discomforts, she went on, but at the open corner of One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street a sudden more ruthless gust of wind ripped the small hat from her head. In the next minute the black clouds opened wider and spilled their water with unusual fury. The streets became swirling rivers. Helga Crane, forgetting her mental torment, looked about anxiously for a sheltering taxi. A few taxis sped by, but inhabited, so she began desperately to struggle through wind and rain toward one of the buildings, where she could take shelter in a store or a doorway. But another whirl of wind lashed her and, scornful of her slight strength, tossed her into the swollen gutter.

Now she knew beyond all doubt that she had no desire to die, and certainly not there nor then. Not in such a messy, wet manner. Death had lost all of its picturesque aspects to the girl lying soaked and soiled in the flooded

gutter. So, though she was very tired and very weak, she dragged herself up and succeeded finally in making her way to the store whose blurred light she had marked for her destination.

She had opened the door and had entered before she was aware that inside people were singing a song which she was conscious of having heard years ago—hundreds of years it seemed. Repeated over and over, she made out the words:

. . . Showers of blessings,
Showers of blessings . . .

She was conscious too of a hundred pairs of eyes upon her and she stood there, drenched and disheveled, at the door of this improvised meeting-house.

. . . Showers of blessings . . .

The appropriateness of the song, with its constant reference to showers, the ridiculousness of herself in such surroundings, was too much for Helga Crane's frayed nerves. She sat down on the floor, a dripping heap, and laughed and laughed and laughed.

It was into a shocked silence that she laughed. For at the first hysterical peal the words of the song had died in the singers' throats, and the wheezy organ had lapsed into stillness. But in a moment there were hushed solicitous voices; she was assisted to her feet and led haltingly to a chair near the low platform at the far end of the room. On one side of her a tall, angular black woman under a queer hat sat down, on the other a fattish yellow man with huge, outstanding ears and long, nervous hands.

The singing began again, this time a low wailing thing:

Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow
That a time could ever be,
When I let the Savior's pity
Plead in vain, and proudly answered:

"All of self and none of Thee,
All of self and none of Thee."

Yet he found me, I beheld Him,
Bleeding on the cursed tree;
Heard Him pray: "Forgive them, Father."
And my wistful heart said faintly,
"Some of self and some of Thee,
Some of self and some of Thee."

There were, it appeared, endless moaning verses. Behind Helga a woman had begun to cry audibly, and soon, somewhere else, another. Outside, the wind still bellowed. The wailing singing went on:

. . . Less of self and more of Thee,
Less of self and more of Thee.

Helga too began to weep, at first silently, softly; then with great racking sobs. Her nerves were so torn, so aching, her body so wet, so cold! It was a relief to cry unrestrainedly, and she gave herself freely to soothing tears, not noticing that the groaning and sobbing of those about her had increased, unaware that the grotesque ebony figure at her side had begun gently to pat her arm to the rhythm of the singing and to croon softly: "Yes, chile, yes, chile." Nor did she notice the furtive glances that the man on her other side cast at her between his fervent shouts of "Amen!" and "Praise God for a sinner!"

She did notice, though, that the tempo, the atmosphere of the place, had changed, and gradually she ceased to weep and gave her attention to what was happening about her. Now they were singing:

. . . Jesus knows all about my troubles. . . .

Men and women were swaying and clapping their hands, shouting and stamping their feet to the frankly irreverent melody of the song. Without warning the woman at her

side threw off her hat, leaped to her feet, waved her long arms, and shouted shrilly: "Glory! Hallelujah!" and then, in a wild, ecstatic fury jumped up and down before Helga, clutching at the girl's soaked coat, and screamed: "Come to Jesus, you pore los' sinner!" Alarmed for the fraction of a second, involuntarily Helga had shrunk from her grasp, wriggling out of the wet coat when she could not loosen the crazed creature's hold. At the sight of the bare arms and neck growing out of the clinging red dress, a shudder shook the swaying man at her right. On the face of the dancing woman before her a disapproving frown gathered. She shrieked: "A scarlet 'oman. Come to Jesus, you pore los' Jezebel!"

At this the short brown man on the platform raised a placating hand and sanctimoniously delivered himself of the words: "Remembah de words of our Mastah: 'Let him that is without sin cast de first stone.' Let us pray for our errin' sistah."

Helga Crane was amused, angry, disdainful, as she sat there, listening to the preacher praying for her soul. But though she was contemptuous, she was being too well entertained to leave. And it was, at least, warm and dry. So she stayed, listening to the fervent exhortation to God to save her and to the zealous shoutings and groanings of the congregation. Particularly she was interested in the writhings and weepings of the feminine portion, which seemed to predominate. Little by little the performance took on an almost Bacchic vehemence. Behind her, before her, beside her, frenzied women gesticulated, screamed, wept, and tottered to the praying of the preacher, which had gradually become a cadenced chant. When at last he ended, another took up the plea in the same moaning chant, and then another. It went on and on without pause with the persistence of some unconquerable faith exalted beyond time and reality.

Fascinated, Helga Crane watched until there crept upon her an indistinct horror of an unknown world. She felt

herself in the presence of a nameless people, observing rites of a remote obscure origin. The faces of the men and women took on the aspect of a dim vision. "This," she whispered to herself, "is terrible. I must get out of here." But the horror held her. She remained motionless, watching, as if she lacked the strength to leave the place—foul, vile, and terrible, with its mixture of breaths, its contact of bodies, its concerted convulsions, all in wild appeal for a single soul. Her soul.

And as Helga watched and listened, gradually a curious influence penetrated her; she felt an echo of the weird orgy resound in her own heart; she felt herself possessed by the same madness; she too felt a brutal desire to shout and fling herself about. Frightened at the strength of the obsession, she gathered herself for one last effort to escape, but vainly. In rising, weakness and nausea from last night's unsuccessful attempt to make herself drunk overcame her. She had eaten nothing since yesterday. She fell forward against the crude railing which enclosed the little platform. For a single moment she remained there in silent stillness, because she was afraid she was going to be sick. And in that moment she was lost,—or saved. The yelling figures about her pressed forward, closing her in on all sides. Maddened, she grasped at the railing, and with no previous intention began to yell like one insane, drowning every other clamor, while torrents of tears streamed down her face. She was unconscious of the words she uttered, or their meaning: "Oh, God, mercy, mercy. Have mercy on me!" but she repeated them over and over.

From those about her came a thunderclap of joy. Arms were stretched toward her with savage frenzy. The women dragged themselves upon their knees or crawled over the floor like reptiles, sobbing and pulling their hair and tearing off their clothing. Those who succeeded in getting near to her leaned forward to encourage the unfortunate sister, dropping hot tears and beads of sweat upon her bare arms and neck.

The thing became real. A miraculous calm came upon her. Life seemed to expand, and to become very easy. Helga Crane felt within her a supreme aspiration toward the regaining of simple happiness, a happiness unburdened by the complexities of the lives she had known. About her the tumult and the shouting continued, but in a lesser degree. Some of the more exuberant worshipers had fainted into inert masses, the voices of others were almost spent. Gradually the room grew quiet and almost solemn and to the kneeling girl time seemed to sink back into the mysterious grandeur and holiness of far-off simpler centuries.

HOME TO HARLEM

By CLAUDE McKAY

JAKE was paid off. He changed a pound note he had brought with him. He had fifty-nine dollars. From South Ferry he took an express subway train for Harlem.

Jake drank three Martini cocktails with cherries in them. The price, he noticed, had gone up from ten to twenty-five cents. He went to Bank's and had a Maryland fried-chicken feed—a big one with candied sweet potatoes.

He left his suitcase behind the counter of a saloon on Lenox Avenue. He went for a promenade on Seventh Avenue between One Hundred and Thirty-fifth and One Hundred and Fortieth Streets. He thrilled to Harlem. His blood was hot. His eyes were alert as he sniffed the street like a hound. Seventh Avenue was nice, a little too nice that night.

Jake turned off on Lenox Avenue. He stopped before an ice-cream parlor to admire girls sipping ice-cream soda through straws. He went into a cabaret. . . .

A little brown girl aimed the arrow of her eye at him as he entered. Jake was wearing a steel-gray English suit. It fitted him loosely and well, perfectly suited his presence. She knew at once that Jake must have just landed. She rested her chin on the back of her hands and smiled at him. She was brown, but she had tinted her leaf-like face to a ravishing chestnut. She had on an orange scarf over a green frock, which was way above her knees, giving an adequate view of legs lovely in fine champagne-colored stockings. . . .

Her shaft hit home. . . . Jake crossed over to her table. He ordered Scotch and soda.

"Scotch is better with soda or even water," he said. "English folks don't take whisky straight, as we do."

But she preferred ginger-ale in place of soda. The cabaret singer, seeing that they were making up to each other, came expressly over to their table and sang. Jake gave the singer fifty cents. . . .

Her left hand was on the table. Jake covered it with his right.

"Is it clear sailing between us, sweetie?" he asked.

"Sure thing. You just landed from over there?"

"Just today."

"But there wasn't no boat in with soldiers today, daddy."

"I made it in a special one."

"Why, you lucky baby. . . . I'd like to go to another place, though. What about you?"

"Anything you say, I'm game," responded Jake.

They walked along Lenox Avenue. He held her arm. His flesh tingled. He felt as if his whole body was a flaming wave. She was intoxicated, blinded under the overwhelming force.

But nevertheless she did not forget her business.

"How much is it going to be, daddy?" she demanded.

"How much? How much? Five?"

"Aw no, daddy . . ."

"Ten?"

She shook her head.

"Twenty, sweetie," he said gallantly.

"Daddy," she answered, "I wants fifty."

"Good," he agreed. He was satisfied. She was responsive. She was beautiful. He loved the curious color on her cheek.

They went to a buffet flat on One Hundred and Thirty-seventh Street. The proprietress opened the door without removing the chain and peeked out. She was a matronly mulatto woman. She recognized the girl, who had put herself in front of Jake, and she slid back the chain and said, "Come right in."

The windows were heavily and carefully shaded. There was beer and wine, and there was plenty of hard liquor. Black and brown men sat at two tables in one room, playing poker. In the other room a phonograph was grinding out a "blues," and some couples were dancing, thick as maggots in a vat of sweet liquor, and as wriggling.

Jake danced with the girl. They shuffled warmly, gloriously about the room. He encircled her waist with both hands, and she put both of hers to his shoulders and laid her head against his breast. And they shuffled around.

"Harlem! Harlem!" thought Jake. "Where else could I have all this life but Harlem? Good old Harlem! Harlem, I've got you' number down. Lenox Avenue, you're a bear, I know it. And, baby honey, sure enough you'se a pippin for your pappy. Oh, boy! . . ."

After Jake had paid for his drinks, that fifty-dollar note was all he had left in the world. He gave it to the girl. . . .

"Is we going now, honey?" he asked her.

"Sure, daddy. Let's beat it." . . .

Oh, to be in Harlem again after two years away. The deep-dyed color, the thickness, the closeness of it. The noises of Harlem. The sugared laughter. The honey-talk on its streets. And all night long ragtime "blues" playing somewhere . . . singing somewhere, dancing somewhere! oh, the contagious fever of Harlem. Burning everywhere in dark-eyed Harlem. . . . Burning now in Jake's sweet blood. . . .

He woke up in the morning in a state of perfect peace. She brought him hot coffee and cream and doughnuts. He yawned. He sighed. He was satisfied. He breakfasted. He washed. He dressed. The sun was shining. He sniffed the fine dry air. Happy, familiar Harlem.

"I ain't got a cent to my name," mused Jake, "but ahm as happy as a prince, all the same. Yes, I is."

He loitered down Lenox Avenue. He shoved his hand in his pocket and pulled out the fifty-dollar note. A piece

of paper was pinned to it on which was scrawled in pencil:

"Just a little gift from a baby girl to a honey boy!"

. . . . . .

"Great balls of fire. Looka here! See mah luck." Jake stopped in his tracks . . . went on . . . stopped again . . . retraced his steps . . . checked himself. "Guess I won't go back right now. Never let a woman think you're too crazy about her. But she's a particularly sweet piece of business. Me and her again tonight. . . . Handful o' luck shot straight outa heaven. Oh, boy, Harlem is mine."

Jake went rolling along Fifth Avenue. He crossed over to Lenox Avenue and went into Uncle Doc's saloon, where he had left his bag. Called for a glass of Scotch. "Gimme the siphon, Doc. I'm off the straight stuff."

"Iszh you? Counta what?"

"Hits the belly better this way. I l'arned it over the other side."

A slap on the shoulder brought him sharply round. "Zeddy Plummer! What grave is you risen from?" he cried.

"Buddy, you looks so good to me, I could kish you," Zeddy said.

"Where?"

"Everywhere . . . French style."

"One on one cheek and one on the other."

"Savee vous?"

"Parlee-vous?"

Uncle Doc set another glass on the counter and poured out pure Bourbon. Zeddy reached a little above Jake's shoulders. He was stocky, thick shouldered, flat-footed, and walked like a bear. Some more customers came in and the buddies eased round to the short side of the bar.

"What part of the earth done belch you out?" demanded Zeddy. "Nevah heard no God's tidings a-you sence we missed you from Brest."

"And how about you?" Jake countered. "Didn't them Germans git you scrambling over the top?"

"Nevah see'd them, buddy. None a-them showed the goose-step around Brest. Have a shot on me. . . . Well, dawg bite me, but—say, Jake we've got some more stuff to booze over."

Zeddy slapped Jake on his breast and looked him over again. "Tha's some stuff you're strutting in, boh. 'Taint 'Merican and it ain't French."

"English." Jake showed his clean, white teeth.

"Mah granny an' me! You been in that theah white folks' country, too?"

"And don't I look as if I'se been? Where else could a fellow git such good and cheap man clothes to cover his skin?"

"Buddy, I know it's the truth. What you doing today?"

"No, when you make me think ov it, particular thing. And you?"

"I'm alongshore, but I ain't gwine to work this day."

"I guess I've got to be heaving along right back to it, too, in pretty short time. I got to get me a room but—"

Uncle Doc reminded Jake that his suitcase was there.

"I ain't nevah fohgitting all mah worldly goods," responded Jake.

Zeddy took Jake to a poolroom where they played. Jake was the better man. From the poolroom they went to Aunt Hattie's chitterling joint in One Hundred and Thirty-second Street, where they fed. Fricassee chicken and rice. Green peas. Stewed corn.

Aunt Hattie's was renowned among the lowly of Harlem's black belt. It was a little basement joint, smoke-colored. And Aunt Hattie was weather-beaten, dark-brown, cherry-faced, with two rusty-red front teeth sticking together conspicuously out of her twisted, spread-away mouth. She cooked delicious food—home-cooked food they called it. None of the boys loafing round that section of Fifth Avenue would dream of going to any other place for their "poke chops."

Aunt Hattie admired her new customer from the kitchen

door and he quite filled her sight. And when she went with the dish rag to wipe the oilcloth before setting down the cocoanut pie, she rubbed her breast against Jake's shoulder and a sensual light gleamed in her aged smoke-red eyes.

The buddies talked about the days of Brest. Zeddy recalled the everlasting unloading and unloading of ships and the toting of lumber. The house of the Young Men's Christian Association, overlooking the harbor, where colored soldiers were not wanted. . . . The central Rue de Siam and the point near the Prefecture of Marine, from which you could look on the red lights of the Quartier Reserve. The fatal fights between black men and white in the *Maisons closes*. The encounters between apaches and white Americans. The French sailors that couldn't get the Yankee idea of amour and men. And the cemetery, just beyond the old mediæval gate of the town, where he left his second-best buddy.

"Poor boh. Was always bellyaching for a chance over the top. Nevah got it nor nothing. Not even a baid in the hospital. Strong like a bull, yet just knocked off in the dark through raw cracker cussedness. Some life it was, buddy, in them days. We was always on the defensive as if the boches, as the froggies called them, was right down on us."

"Yet you stuck t'rough it, toting lumber. Got back to Harlem all right, though."

"You bet I did, boh. You kain trust Zeddy Plummer to look out for his own black hide. . . . But you, buddy. How come you just vanished that way like a spook? How did you take your tail out ov it?"

Jake told Zeddy how he walked out of it straight to the station in Brest. Le Havre, London. The West India docks. And back home to Harlem.

"But you must keep it dark, buddy," Zeddy cautioned. "Don't go shooting off your mouth too free. Gov'mant still smoking out deserters and draft dodgers."

"I ain't told no niggers but you, boh. Nor ofay, neither. Ahm in your confidence, chappie."

"That's all right, buddy." Zeddy put his hand on Jake's knee. "It's better to keep your business close all the time. But I'll tell you this for your perticular information. Niggers am awful close-mouthed in some things. There is fellows here in Harlem that just telled the draft to mount upstairs. Police and soldiers were hunting ev'where foh them. And they was right here in Harlem. Fifty dollars foh them. All their friends knowed it and not a one gived them in. I tell you, niggers am amazing sometimes. Yet other times, without any natural reason, they will just go vomiting out their guts to the ofays about one another."

"God; but it's good to get back home again! . . ." said Jake.

"I should think you was hungry foh a li'l brown honey. I tell you trute, buddy. I made mine ovah there, spittin ov ev'thing. I l'arned her a little z'inglese and she l'arned me beaucoup plus the French stuff. The real stuff, buddy. But I was tearing mad and glad to get back all the same. Take it from me, buddy, there ain't no honey lak to that theah comes out of our own belonging-to-us honeycomb."

"Man, what you telling me?" cried Jake. "Don't I know it? What else you think made me leave over the other side? And dog mah doggone ef I didn't find it just as I landed."

"K-hhhhh! Khhhhh!" Zeddy laughed. "Dog mah cats! You done tasted the real life a'ready?"

"Last night was the end of the world, buddy, and tonight ahm going back there," chanted Jake as he rose and began kicking up his heels round the joint.

Zeddy also got up and put on his gray cap. They went back to the poolroom. Jake met two more fellows that he knew and got into a ring of Zeddy's pals. . . . Most of them were longshoremen. There was plenty of work, Jake learned. Before he left the poolroom he and Zeddy agreed to meet the next evening at Uncle Doc's.

"Got to work tomorrow, boh," Zeddy informed Jake.

"Good old New York! The same old wench of a city.

Elevated racketing over you' head. Subway bellowing under you' feet. Me foh wrastling round them piers again. Scratching down to the bottom of them ships and scrambling out. All alongshore for me now. No more fooling with the sea. Same old New York. Everybody dashing round like crazy. . . . Same old New York. But the ofay faces am different from over there. And the air it—O Gawd, it works in you' flesh and blood like Scotch. O Lawdy, Lawdy! I wants to live to a hundred and finish mah days in New York."

Jake threw himself up as if to catch the air pouring down from the blue sky. . . .

"Harlem! Harlem! Little thicker, little darker and noisier and smellier but Harlem just the same. The niggers done plowed through Hundred and Thirtieth Street. Heading straight foh One Hundred and Twenty-fifth. Spades beyond Eighth Avenue. Going, going, going Harlem! Going up! Nevah befoh I seed so many dickty shines in such swell motorcars. Plenty moh nigger shops. Seventh Avenue done gone high-brown. O Lawdy! Harlem bigger, Harlem better and sweeter."

. . . . . .

"Streets and streets! One Hundred and Thirty-second, Thirty-third, Thirty-fourth. It wasn't One Hundred and Thirty-fifth and it wasn't beyond theah. . . . O Lawd! how did I fohgit to remember the street and number. I reeled out there like a drunken man. I been so happy. . . .

"Thirty-fourth, Thirty-second, Thirty-third. . . . Only difference in the name. All the streets am just the same and all the houses like as peas. I could try this one heah or that one there but—Rabbit foot! I didn't even git her name. Oh, Jakie, Jake! What a big Ah-Ah you is.

"I was a fool not to go back right then when I feeled like it. What did I want to tighten up mahself and crow and strut like a crazy cat for? A grand Ah-Ah I is. Feet in mah hands. Take me back to the Baltimore tonight. I ain't gwine to know no peace till I lay these here hands on mah tantalizing brown again."

WALLS OF JERICHO

By RUDOLPH FISHER

On the night when Shine told Jinx and Bubber the story of the battle of Jericho, he had no sooner left Pat's than another argument was on. Hitherto, Jinx and Bubber's nocturnal enmity had always ended at least without catastrophe; to-night catastrophe descended upon them, and the thing which each sought to avert, by the very extravagance of his quarrels, was by the same extravagance rendered inevitable. To-night they came to blows.

Jinx started it.

"There now, you dumb Oscar," he said to Bubber with great relish, in a voice that carried throughout Pat's barroom.

"There now whut, jackass?"

"Didn't I tell y'?"

"You ain't tole me nuthin'—and if you did, it 'twasn' nothin' nohow."

"I tole you"—Jinx spaced his words for emphasis—"that nex' thing we knowed she'd have 'im goin' in d' main door of d' church—and whut'd you say? 'Aw no. Ain' no gal go'n' do nuthin' like that to *that* boogy. Hard boogy, he is.' Thass whut you said. Yea. And look. He comes in and tells us ev'thing d' damn preacher said. Don't leave out nuthin'."

"That don' prove he went in d' main door," argued Bubber with overacted patience. "He could 'a' come down through d' skylight f' all I know."

"Like a big, black angel, I s'pose?" said Jinx and grinned with surrounding laughter.

"Yea—or a long-laigged, speckle-face giraffe," retorted Bubber, swelling.

Jinx grew somber. "That's d' trouble with a li'l round black hippo like you. All give and no take. When you kid me I kin take it. When I kid you, you can't."

"You don' seem to be takin' that so good," said Bubber. "Don' nobody git no madder'n you do."

"No?—look at y' now. 'Bout to bus' open and spatter d' whole barroom with ink."

"I kin remember," Bubber returned, "when you didn' act like nobody's long-lost brother. Never will fo'get that night you got so mad you started slippin' me in d' dozens."

This was approaching dangerous ground, this reference to their reactions. To quarrel over subjects in general was bad enough; to quarrel over each other might be disastrous. It brought them closer to the truth about themselves, yet not quite close enough; it did not reach the actual sore, it only lifted off the scab.

"Well, you oughter been slipped," Jinx said. "Any bird can't take kiddin' no better'n that needs to be kidded and kidded hard."

The customary comments accompanied this discourse:

"Tell 'em 'bout it!"

"That means fight in my home."

"Grease us twice!"

"They jes' foolin'. If they meant it they'd both be daid by now."

"Me, I'm bettin' on Long Boy. He'll wrap hisself 'round Squatty and squeeze all th' ambition out'n 'im."

Bubber challenged, "Well—you better not slip me ag'in."

"No?" said Jinx, like a small boy who has been dared to knock off the chip. "No? Well—yo' granddaddy was a mule—Now, what you got to say 'bout that?"

Bubber said nothing. Instead he moved toward Jinx with surprising ease and mysterious rapidity and suddenly Jinx doubled forward from the force of an almost invisible blow to the midriff. "What *you* go'n' say 'bout *that?*" Bubber asked, looking belligerently up into Jinx's astounded face.

Not quite certain whether this was serious or make-

believe, Jinx reached mechanically forward and gathered Bubber's neck and shoulders in an embrace usually reserved for pianos. Failing to twist himself free Bubber began swinging away at the other's kidneys, and in a moment the tussle removed from the atmosphere all suggestion of possible jest.

"Look-a yeh!" somebody gasped.

"They ain't roughin' sho' nuff, is they?"

"They ain't playin' hop-scotch."

"Well, ain't this sump'n?"

But before either could damage the other, Pat, who was an excellent manager and always at the spot that needed him most, had heard the commotion from the next room and hurried to the scene. Pat was not bad with his hands himself, and it is significant that with apparent ease he managed quickly to separate them.

"What the hell you think this is?" he inquired, as for a moment they stood off from each other glaring.

"Jes' git out d' way, thass all," said one.

"He been cryin' fo' it—now he go'n' git it," vowed the other.

"Not here he ain't," Pat decided. "Look," he pointed. "Y'all see that door? All right. I told y' once before the nex' time you wanted to settle sump'n I was go'n' put you in the cellar and let the best man come up." He strode to the door, unlocked and opened it, and pressed a button. "Come on, if you mean it— Come on."

Neither was willing to admit that he did not mean it, and in another moment the gaping bystanders saw them disappear through the cellar door, which Pat promptly closed behind them.

"Well, what do y' know 'bout that?"

"Ain't this a dog?"

"Salty dog, I mean."

"Damn if d' worm ain' turned."

"Yea—but which 'a' one is d' worm?"

The bystanders crowded about the door, listening. Pat,

grinning, kept his hand on the knob, his ear against the panel. The others pressed forward: a lean black boy as tall as Pat, with tight, slick skin and wide, white, shifting eyes; a thin, short tan-skinned lad of twenty, with a sharp face half hidden by a voluminous, lopsided cap; a paunchy old brown fellow in shirt sleeves and suspenders, with puffed cheeks and rolling pop-eyes; a long, thin, senilely couching granddad with the complexion of a mummy and a gloating, toothless grin; a parchment-covered gambler, a tea-colored card-shark, a khaki-skinned pickpocket, a dozen others, all surging forward, all listening with arched brows or grins of relish. This was gonna be good, this was. Them two guys meant blood.

Most of these, hearing nothing, presently fell back commenting:

"Bet on the long boy!"

"Give you odds."

"Don' tell me—that jasper can fight."

"Squatty'll wear him down, though."

"I knowed they'd ask f' each other sooner or later—"

"Too bad now."

"Thass the reason I never kid nobody—might have to make him take it, see?"

"Wonder if they'll cut?"

"Can't tell what a guy'll do when he's losin'."

"Who'll move pianers to-morrer?"

"Better git yo' mop out, Pat."

"Anybody sent for the ambulance?"

"Ain't got a chance in the world—"

"Five bucks says he *is*—"

"Who—String-bean?"

"Put yo' money wha' yo' mouth is—"

It seemed an endless time, but nobody's eyes left the door for long. Stories suggested by the present affair began to be told, sudden gusts and flurries of laughter swept the room. Argument ensued over the nature of the quarrel—How had it begun? So—the hell it had—it was like this—

good thing: those two were a constant pain in the what's-a-name with their continuous quarrel. Over a woman, hey? Huh—jes' goes to show y'—

Pat was called away from his post by some duty in the pool room. He made sure the cellar door was locked and went about his business, promising to return in time for the rest of the fun.

Another long wait followed—Hear anything? Not a damn thing. Fools must 'a' gone down there and kilt each other. Remember the night Sam Tyler and Joe West got hooked up? Yea. Waitin', they was, in the same hotel. The head waiter give Sam a check that should 'a' been Joe's, so Joe was sore to start with. Well, the man ordered Washington pie, see? You know—that white stuff with whoop' cream all over it. And Sam brought *chocolate* pie by mistake. So the fay man looked up at Sam, he did, and turned up his nose, like, and says, "Waiter, I ordered George. You've brought me Booker." Well, Joe heard it and when he got through kiddin' Sam 'bout it, 'twasn't nothin' left for 'em to do but fight. Brother, I mean, neither one of 'em ever got over that scrap.—Judas Priest—it's been three-quarters of an hour! Nary a sound. Better get Pat—thought he was coming back so soon? He was, but he got in a argument with Boody Mullins over a protection-fee. Well, let's go get him for Chris' sake—them two damn fools may be tricklin' all over the floor by now. . . .

Patmore came hurriedly in from the poolroom, flanked by the two who'd summoned him. He paused a moment to listen, his ear against the door. "I hear sump'n," he said. "Wonder is—?" and at once unlocked and opened the door.

Everyone had pressed forward behind Pat, but now they all fell back, and as a lane opened through their midst, Jinx was seen framed in the doorway. He was swaying a little from side to side even though he attempted to steady himself against the door frame, and there was a

far-off vacancy in his eyes that made him seem completely unaware of those who stood and stared at him. No one said anything, no one moved to help him, as he relinquished his support and started uncertainly forward.

He took four or five grotesque tottering steps, then his legs and feet seemed to get all tangled like those of a fly trying to escape sticky paper, and rather slowly, he sank to the floor and lay crumpled in a twisted, senseless heap.

Pat, who alone of all the onlookers could afford to take an active hand in this matter, started toward that crumpled heap. A sound behind him brought him up short and he turned with the others to see the short, broad form of Bubber come into and through the doorway.

Bubber looked decidedly dazed, yet not so much so as had Jinx, and the unsteadiness of his bearing was somewhat modified by his rotundity. His progress through the crowd toward his prone enemy resembled that of a pool ball through a scattered field of its fellows, kissing first this one then that and accordingly zigzagging forward from side to side; like the other balls, his fellows each withdrew a little at each glancing impact, not one extending a supporting hand or revealing a sympathetic impulse. Even Pat did not offer to catch him when he reached Jinx's figure, tripped over Jinx's feet, and fell across Jinx's body.

Then curious things happened.

Jinx, roused by the jolt of Bubber's fall, stirred drowsily with a movement that rolled Bubber off to one side, and Bubber was heard to murmur stupidly, "Ain't nuthin' to fight about, boogy. Ain't you my boy?"

Pat called abruptly to a bystander for help, and together they reached down and raised Jinx to his feet. He opened his eyes for a moment, then, as if realizing the futility of trying to see anything, allowed his heavy lids to drop again. They got him on to a chair and his head sagged limply forward.

As they were in the act of turning to render similar

assistance to Bubber something halted them half-about and they exchanged puzzled and apprehensive looks. Everyone exchanged similar glances with his neighbor, gazed at Jinx's sagging form in a fear that grew into conviction; for in that moment something happened again, as if to substantiate itself by repetition: A shudder took hold on Jinx's body, shook it from below upwards, halted in his throat with a little choking sound that seemed almost to break his neck.

"Death rattle—Jesus—!" somebody muttered. One or two peripheral observers near the door eased stealthily out. "Ain' go'n' be no witness in no murder case—no *suh*."

Scowling, Pat stepped forward, seized Jinx's shoulder, shook him, called him, pushed up his lids with a thumb. Each lid, released, drooped slowly, resolutely shut. Pat frisked Jinx's clothing, palpated him, searched swiftly but futilely for the wound that must have been dealt; swung around to find Bubber on hands and knees trying to rise, laid hold and yanked him to his feet. Bubber stood teetering like an exercising-ball, stared sleepily about, said, "Where-my-boy?" and unceremoniously sat down unanswered. Pat strode through the cellar door and disappeared down the stairs.

Somebody now searched Bubber for a weapon, and somebody else said Pat had gone to find it. Periodically a spasmodic shudder almost jerked Jinx off his chair. Nobody seemed to know what to do, everyone was helpless.

"Must 'a' strangled 'im, huh?"

"Jes' goes to show y'—"

Presently Pat returned and came into the circle with ominous deliberateness. He stood for a moment looking down on the helpless pair, nodding his head in mingled conviction and disgust. Then he held up what he had found downstairs, a round, quart bottle with perhaps a half-inch of whisky left in its bottom.

"Give it to Jinx," urged a bystander. "Might stop that rattle yet—"

"Rattle, hell," said Pat. "That jigaboo ain't got a thing but the hiccoughs." He set the bottle on the bar counter with a sarcastic thump. "That," he growled glumly, "is the only damn thing they hit. They found a case."

DRAMA

PLUMES[1]

A Folk Tragedy

By GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON

Characters

Charity Brown, the mother.
Emmerline Brown, the daughter.
Tildy, the friend.
Doctor Scott, physician.

Scene: A poor cottage in the South.
Time: Contemporary.

Scene: *The kitchen of a two-room cottage. A window overlooking the street. A door leading to the street, one leading to the back yard and one to the inner room. A stove, a table with shelf over it, a washtub. A rocking-chair, a cane-bottom chair. Needle, thread, scissors, etc., on table.*

Scene opens with Charity Brown *heating a poultice over the stove. A groaning is heard from the inner room.*

Charity. Yes, honey, mamma is fixin' somethin' to do you

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good. Yes, my baby, jus' you wait—I'm a-coming. [*Knock is heard at door. It is gently pushed open and* TILDY *comes in cautiously.*]

TILDY [*whispering*]. How is she?

CHARITY. Poorly, poorly. Didn't rest last night none hardly. Move that dress and set in th' rocker. I been trying to snatch a minute to finish it but don't seem like I can. She won't have nothing to wear if she—she—

TILDY. I understands. How near done is it?

CHARITY. Ain't so much more to do.

TILDY [*takes up dress from chair; looks at it*]. I'll do some on it.

CHARITY. Thank you, sister Tildy. Whip that torshon on and turn down the hem in the skirt.

TILDY [*measuring dress against herself*]. How deep?

CHARITY. Let me see, now. [*Studies a minute with finger against lip.*] I tell—jus' baste it, 'cause you see—she wears 'em short, but—it might be— [*Stops.*]

TILDY [*bowing her head comprehendingly*]. Huh-uh, I see exzactly. [*Sighs.*] You'd want it long—over her feet—then.

CHARITY. That's it, sister Tildy. [*Listening.*] She's some easy now! [*Stirring poultice.*] Jest can't get this poltis' hot enough somehow this morning.

TILDY. Put some red pepper in it. Got any?

CHARITY. Yes. There ought to be some in one of them boxes on the shelf there. [*Points.*]

TILDY [*goes to shelf, looks about and gets the pepper*]. Here, put a-plenty of this in.

CHARITY [*Groans are heard from the next room*]. Good Lord, them pains got her again. She suffers so, when she's 'wake.

TILDY. Poor little thing. How old is she now, sister Charity?

CHARITY. Turning fourteen this coming July.

TILDY [*shaking her head dubiously*]. I sho' hope she'll be mended by then.

CHARITY. It don't look much like it, but I trusts so—

[*Looking worried.*] That doctor's mighty late this morning.

TILDY. I expects he'll be 'long in no time. Doctors is mighty onconcerned here lately.

CHARITY [*going toward inner room with poultice*]. They surely is and I don't have too much confidence in none of 'em. [*You can hear her soothing the child.*]

TILDY [*listening*]. Want me to help you put it on, sister Charity?

CHARITY [*from inner room*]. No, I can fix it. [*Coming back from sick room, shaking her head rather dejectedly.*]

TILDY. How is she, sister Charity?

CHARITY. Mighty feeble. Gone back to sleep now. My poor little baby. [*Bracing herself.*] I'm going to put on some coffee now.

TILDY. I'm sho' glad. I feel kinder low-spirited.

CHARITY. It's me that's low-sperited. The doctor said last time he was here he might have to operate—said she mought have a chance then. But I tell you the truth, I've got no faith a-tall in 'em. They takes all your money for nothing.

TILDY. They sho' do and don't leave a cent for putting you away decent.

CHARITY. That's jest it. They takes all you got and then you dies jest the same. It ain't like they was sure.

TILDY. No, they ain't sure. That's it exzactly. But they takes your money jes' the same, and leaves you flat.

CHARITY. I been thinking 'bout Zeke these last few days—how he was put away—

TILDY. I wouldn't worry 'bout him now. He's out of his troubles.

CHARITY. I know. But it worries me when I think about how he was put away . . . that ugly pine coffin, jest one shabby old hack and nothing else to show—to show—what we thought about him.

TILDY. Hush, sister! Don't you worry over him. He's happy now, anyhow.

CHARITY. I can't help it! Then little Bessie. We all jest scrooged in one hack and took her little coffin in our lap all the way out to the graveyard. [*Breaks out crying.*]

TILDY. Do hush, sister Charity. You done the best you could. Poor folks got to make the best of it. The Lord understands—

CHARITY. I know that—but I made up my mind the time Bessie went that the next one of us what died would have a shore nuff funeral, everything grand,—with plumes!—I saved and saved and now—this yah doctor—

TILDY. All they think about is cuttin' and killing and taking your money. I got nothin' to put 'em doing.

CHARITY [*goes over to washtub and rubs on clothes*]. Me neither. These clothes got to get out somehow, I needs every cent.

TILDY. How much that washing bring you?

CHARITY. Dollar and a half. It's worth a whole lot more. But what can you do?

TILDY. You can't do nothing— Look there, sister Charity, ain't that coffee boiling?

CHARITY [*wipes hands on apron and goes to stove*]. Yes, it's boiling good fashioned. Come on, drink some.

TILDY. There ain't nothing I'd rather have than a good strong cup of coffee. [CHARITY *pours* TILDY'S *cup.*] [*Sweetening and stirring hers.*] Pour you some. [CHARITY *pours her own cup.*] I'd been dead, too, long ago if it hadn't 'a' been for my coffee.

CHARITY. I love it, but it don't love me—gives me the shortness of breath.

TILDY [*finishing her cup, taking up sugar with spoon.*] Don't hurt me. I could drink a barrel.

CHARITY [*drinking more slowly—reaching for coffee pot.*] Here, drink another cup.

TILDY. I shore will, that cup done me a lot of good.

CHARITY [*looking into her empty cup thoughtfully.*] I

wish Dinah Morris would drop in now. I'd ask her what these grounds mean.

TILDY. I can read 'em a little myself.

CHARITY. You can? Well, for the Lord's sake, look here and tell me what this cup says! [*Offers cup to* TILDY. TILDY *wards it off.*]

TILDY. You got to turn it 'round in your saucer three times first.

CHARITY. Yes, that's right; I forgot. [*Turns cup 'round, counting.*] One, two, three. [*Starts to pick it up.*]

TILDY. Huhudh. [*Meaning no.*] Let it set a minute. It might be watery. [*After a minute, while she finishes her own cup.*] Now let me see. [*Takes cup and examines it very scrutinizingly.*]

CHARITY. What you see?

TILDY [*hesitatingly*]. I ain't seen a cup like this one for many a year. Not since—not since—

CHARITY. When?

TILDY. Not since jest before ma died. I looked in the cup then and saw things and—I stopped looking. . . .

CHARITY. Tell me what you see, I want to know.

TILDY. I don't like to tell no bad news—

CHARITY. Go on. I can stan' anything after all I been thr'u'.

TILDY. Since you're bound to know I'll tell you. [*Charity draws nearer.*] I sees a big gethering!

CHARITY. Gethering, you say?

TILDY. Yes, a big gethering. People all crowded together. Then I see 'em going one by one and two by two. Long line stretching out and out and out!

CHARITY [*in a whisper*]. What you think it is?

TILDY [*awed like*]. Looks like—[*hesitates*]—a possession!

CHARITY [*shouting*]. You sure!

TILDY. I know it is. [*Just then the toll of a church bell is heard and then the steady and slow tramp, tramp, of horse's hoofs. Both women look at each other.*]

TILDY [*in a hushed voice*]. That must be Bell Gibson's

funeral coming 'way from Mt. Zion. [*Gets up and goes to window.*] Yes, it sho' is.

CHARITY [*looking out of the window also*]. Poor Bell suffered many a year; she's out of her pain now.

TILDY. Look, here comes the hearse now!

CHARITY. My Lord! ain't it grand! Look at them horses—look at their heads—plumes—how they shake 'em! Land o' mighty! It's a fine sight, sister Tildy.

TILDY. That must be Jer'miah in that first carriage, bending over like; he shorely is putting her away grand.

CHARITY. No mistake about it. That's Pickett's best funeral turnout he's got.

TILDY. I'll bet it cost a lot.

CHARITY. Fifty dollars, so Matilda Jenkins told me. She had it for Bud. The plumes is what cost.

TILDY. Look at the hacks— [*Counts.*] I believe to my soul there's eight.

CHARITY. Got somebody in all of 'em too—and flowers—She shore got a lot of 'em. [*Both women's eyes follow the tail end of the procession, horses' hoofs die away as they turn away from window. The two women look at each other significantly.*]

TILDY [*significantly*]. Well!— [*They look at each other without speaking for a minute.* CHARITY *goes to the washtub.*] Want these cups washed up?

CHARITY. No, don't mind 'em. I'd rather you get that dress done. I got to get these clothes out.

TILDY [*picking up dress*]. Shore, there ain't so much more to do on it now. [*Knock is heard on the door.* CHARITY *answers knock and admits* DR. SCOTT.]

DR. SCOTT. Good morning. How's the patient to-day?

CHARITY. Not so good, doctor. When she ain't 'sleep she suffer so; but she sleeps mostly.

DR. SCOTT. Well, let's see, let's see. Just hand me a pan of warm water and I'll soon find out just what's what.

CHARITY. All right, doctor. I'll bring it to you right away. [*Bustles about fixing water—looking toward dress* TILDY

is working on.] Poor little Emmerline's been wanting a white dress trimmed with torshon a long time—now she's got it and it looks like—well—[*hesitates*]—t'warn't made to wear.

TILDY. Don't take on so, sister Charity— The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh.

CHARITY. I know—but it's hard—hard— [*Goes into inner room with water. You can hear her talking with the doctor after a minute and the doctor expostulating with her —in a minute she appears at the door, being led from the room by the doctor.*]

DR. SCOTT. No, my dear Mrs. Brown. It will be much better for you to remain outside.

CHARITY. But, doctor—

DR. SCOTT. No. You stay outside and get your mind on something else. You can't possibly be of any service. Now be calm, will you.

CHARITY. I'll try, doctor.

TILDY. The doctor's right. You can't do no good in there.

CHARITY. I knows, but I thought I could hold the pan or somethin'. [*Lowering her voice.*] Says he got to see if her heart is all right or somethin'. I tell you—nowadays—

TILDY. I know.

CHARITY [*softly to* TILDY]. Hope he won't come out here saying he got to operate. [*Goes to washtub.*]

TILDY. I hope so, too. Won't it cost a lot?

CHARITY. That's jest it. It would take all I got saved up.

TILDY. Of course, if he's goin' to get her up—but I don't believe in 'em. I don't believe in 'em.

CHARITY. He didn't promise the'—even if he did, he said maybe it wouldn't do no good.

TILDY. I'd think a long time before I'd let him operate on my chile. Taking all yuh money, promising nothing and ten to one killing her to boot.

CHARITY. This is a hard world.

TILDY. Don't you trus' him. Coffee grounds don't lie!

CHARITY. I don't trust him. I jest want to do what's right

by her. I ought to put these clothes on the line while you're settin' in here, but I jes' hate to go outdoors while he's in there.

TILDY [*getting up*]. I'll hang 'em out. You stay here. Where you' clothespins at?

CHARITY. Hanging right there by the back door in the bag. They ought to dry before dark and then I can iron to-night.

TILDY [*picking up tub*]. They ought to blow dry in no time. [*Goes toward back door.*]

CHARITY. Then I can shore rub 'em over to-night. Say, sister Tildy, hist 'em up with that long saplin' prop leaning in the fence corner.

TILDY [*going out*]. All right.

CHARITY [*standing by the table beating nervously on it with her fingers—listens—and then starts to bustling about the kitchen*]. [*Enter* DOCTOR *from inner room.*]

DR. SCOTT. Well, Mrs. Brown, I've decided I'll have to operate.

CHARITY. My Lord! Doctor—don't say that!

DR. SCOTT. It's the only chance.

CHARITY. You mean she'll get well if you do?

DR. SCOTT. No, I can't say that— It's just a chance—a last chance. And I'll do just what I said, cut the price of the operation down to fifty dollars. I'm willing to do that for you. [CHARITY *throws up her hands in dismay.*]

CHARITY. Doctor, I was so in hopes you wouldn't operate— I— And yo' say you ain't a bit sure she'll get well—even then?

DR. SCOTT. No. I can't be sure. We'll just have to take the chance. But I'm sure, you want to do everything—

CHARITY. Sure, doctor, I do want to—do—everything I can do to—to— Doctor, look at this cup. [*Picks up fortune cup and shows the doctor.*] My fortune's jes' been told this very morning—look at these grounds—they says—[*softly*]—it ain't no use, no use a-tall.

DR. SCOTT. Why, my good woman, don't you believe in

such senseless things. That cup of grounds can't show you anything. Wash them out and forget it.

CHARITY. I can't forget it. I feel like it ain't no use. I'd just be spendin' the money that I needs—for nothing—nothing.

DR. SCOTT. But you won't though— You'll have a clear conscience. You'd know that you did everything you could.

CHARITY. I know that, doctor, but there's things you don't know 'bout—there's other things I got to think about. If she goes—if she must go . . . I had plans—I been getting ready—now— Oh, doctor, I jest can't see how I can have this operation—you say you can't promise—nothing.

DR. SCOTT. I didn't think you'd hesitate about it— I imagined your love for your child—

CHARITY [*breaking in*]. I do love my child. My God, I do love my child. You don't understand . . . but . . . but—can't I have a little time to think about it, doctor? It means so much—to—her—and me.

DR. SCOTT. I tell you. I'll go on over to the office. I'd have to get my—[*hesitates*]—my things, anyhow. And as soon as you make up your mind, get one of the neighbors to run over and tell me. I'll come right back. But don't waste any time now, Mrs. Brown, every minute counts.

CHARITY. Thank you, doctor, thank you. I'll sure send you word as soon as I can. I'm so upset and worried I'm half crazy.

DR. SCOTT. I know you are . . . but don't take too long to make up your mind. . . . It ought to be done to-day. Remember—it may save her. [*Exit.*]

CHARITY [*goes to door of sick room—looking inside for a few minutes. Then starts walking up and down the little kitchen, first holding a hand up to her head and then wringing them. Enter* TILDY *from yard with tub under her arm*].

TILDY. Well, they're all out, sister Charity— [*Stops.*] Why, what's the matter?

CHARITY. The doctor wants to operate.

TILDY [*softly*]. Where he—gone?

CHARITY. Yes—he's gone, but he's coming back—if I send for him.

TILDY. You going to? [*Puts down tub and picks up white dress and begins to sew.*]

CHARITY. I dunno—I got to think.

TILDY. I can't see what's the use myself. He can't save her with no operation— Coffee grounds don't lie.

CHARITY. It would take all the money I got for the operation and then what about puttin' her away? He can't save her—don't even promise ter. I know he can't—I feel it. . . . I feel it. . . .

TILDY. It's in the air. . . . [*Both women sit tense in the silence.* TILDY *has commenced sewing again. Just then a strange, strangling noise comes from the inner room.*]

TILDY. What's that?

CHARITY [*running toward and into inner room*]. Oh, my God! [*From inside.*] Sister Tildy— Come here— No,— Some water, quick. [TILDY *with dress in hand starts toward inner room. Stops at door, sighs and then goes hurriedly back for the water pitcher.* CHARITY *is heard moaning softly in the next room, then she appears at doorway and leans against jamb of door.*] Rip the hem out, sister Tildy.

Curtain

'CRUITER [1]

A One-Act Play

By JONATHAN MATHEUS

Characters

Granny, aged seventy-seven, a typical Negro "Mammy."
Sonny, her grandson, aged twenty-three.
Sissy, his wife, aged twenty.
A White Man, a recruiting agent for a Northern munitions factory.

Scene: A farm cottage in Lower Georgia.
Time: Just after the entry of the United States into the World War.

Early morning and Spring, 1918, in lower Georgia. The rising of the curtain reveals the large room of a Negro cabin. The walls are the reverse of the outside weather-boarding. A kerosene lamp is on a shelf. At the end of the room looking toward the audience is a door leading to a bedroom, where the starchy whiteness of a well-made bed is visible. In front of the spectators, at the rear of the room, is a window without glass, half-closed by a heavy wooden shutter. Four feet from

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the window is a door, wide open, leading to a garden. Rows of collards are seen, an old hoe, and in the background a path to the big road.

On the right is a wide, old-fashioned fireplace, where a big pine log makes a smoldering blaze. GRANNY, *her head swathed in a blue bandana, is bending over the fire, stirring the contents of a huge iron kettle. In the center of the room is a rough table. A hunk of salt pork is on the table and a rusty knife. Under the window is another table supporting a fifteen-quart galvanized iron bucket. A gourd dipper is hanging on the wall between the window and the door. Under the gourd a tin washpan is suspended. Below the basin a box in which oranges have been crated. A backless chair is under the center table. A mongrel dog is curled under it.*

SCENE I

GRANNY [*with profile to the audience, stirring the kettle and singing*].

Nobody knows de trouble Ah've seen,
Nobody knows but Jesus;
Nobody knows de trouble Ah've seen—

[*Stopping abruptly.*] Ah mus' put some mo' watah to dese plague-taked grits. [*Walks to the water bucket, takes down the gourd dipper and fills it with water. Returning to the kettle she slowly pours in the water, stirring as she pours and singing.*] "Nobody knows de trouble Ah've seen"—dah now! [*Hobbles to the open door and looks across the big road toward the east.*] 'Pears like Sonny and Sissy ought to be hyar. It is [*squinting at the sun*], it's mighty nigh onto six o'clock. [*A rooster crows lustily beyond the door. She claps her hands and stamps her feet.*] Skat! Skat, sir. Yo' honery rascal—bringin' me company so early in the mornin'. Ah ain't wantin' to see nobody wid all Ah got tuh do.

[*A mocking bird sings.*] Jes' listen tuh dat bird. Hallelujah! Praise de Lam'. [*Sings.*]

Oh, when de world's on fiah,
Ah wants God's bosom
Fo' mah piller.

[*Goes to the table in the center of the room and begins to slice the bacon.*] "Fo' mah piller." [*Voice is heard outside.*]

SONNY. Whoa, mule, whoa, Ah say.

GRANNY [*putting the bacon in a large iron spider*]. Ah knowed dey'd be a-gwine fum de field. [*Sound of two pairs of shoes is heard; the heavy tread of Sonny, the lighter tread of Sissy.*]

SONNY [*wearing brogans and overalls*]. Mo'in', Granny. Dat bacon sho' smells good.

SISSY [*enters, wearing a blue calico wrapper*]. How yo' feelin', Granny?

GRANNY. Ah ain't feelin' so peart dis mo'in'. Mus' be needin' some spring tonic.

SONNY [*taking down the washpan and dipping water from the bucket into the pan*]. Well, us done planted a haf'n acre of co'n. [*Washing his face vigorously.*] Ah don't know whut Ah'm goin' to do 'bout de cotton dis yeah, ef Ah don't go tuh wah.

SISSY [*dropping down in the doorsill*]. Phew! Mah back is sho' breakin'—stoopin' an' stoopin', drappin' dat co'n.

GRANNY. Well, yo' know yo' po' pappy allus use tuh put in de cotton tuh pay Mistah Bob fo' he's rations fum de Commissary.

SONNY. But dere warn't nary a pesky ole weevil then neither. 'Sides Mistah Bob done tol' me de guv'ment wanted somethin' t'eat. Say dat de Germans ah goin' to sta've us out an' we mus' plant co'n an' 'taters an' sich. He 'lows, too, Ah got tuh gi' 'em all us makes dis yeah, 'scusin' ouah keep, tuh he'p him fo' not sendin' me to camp.

GRANNY. How come? He ain't no sheriff.

SONNY. Don't keer, he somethin' t'other wif dis here Draftin' Bo'd. Yo' know dey done sent off Aunt Ca'line's crazy Jim?

GRANNY. Mah Jesus! Mah Jesus! Yo'se all Ah's lef', Sonny. Gi' it tuh him. Yo' sho'll git kilt ef yo' has to go off fightin'; like yo' gran'pappy bruder, Samuel, was kilt, when he jined de Yankee Army.

SONNY. But 'tain't his'n an' Ah jest as leef die a fightin' dan stay heah an' tek his sass an 'uptiness an' gi' him all Ah mak, lak Ah was on de chain gang.

SISSY [*coming in from the doorsill and throwing out the dirty water in the basin*]. Sonny, Sonny, don't yo' know dese hyar whi' fo'ks?

SONNY [*wiping his hands on his overalls*]. Don't Ah know 'em? Co'se Ah knows 'em. When Ah was in town Sat'day didn't Ah see Mistah Bob 'sputin' wif ol' Judge Wiley? Didn't Ah heah him say dis wah was raisin' hell wid his business, takin' all de niggahs fum de plantations?

GRANNY. Ah knowed dis here disturbance was comin', 'cause Ah seed a light in de sky eb'ry night this week.

SISSY [*washing her hands and wiping them on her dress*]. Where's dey takin' 'em to, Sonny? Do yo' think dey goin' to take yo'?

SONNY. How does Ah know? Whatevah whi' fo'ks wants o' we-all, we-all jes' nacherly got tuh do, Ah s'pose, but Ah ain't ter gwine tuh give Mistah Bob all my wuk an' Sissy's fo' tuh keep me out a wah. Ah ain't skeered.

GRANNY. Boy, yo' don't know whut yo' talkin' 'bout. Ah done seed one wah. Men kilt, heads shot off—all de whi' fo'ks in dey big houses, de wimmins cryin' dey eyes out an' ol' Gen'ral Sherman shootin' an' sottin' on fiah evahthing what 'ud bu'n. [*Mechanically takes the spider off the fire, then the kettle of grits, dishing up both on a large, heavy crockery platter.*]

SISSY [*looking at* GRANNY *with tenderness. She and* SONNY

exchange glances, showing appreciation of her]. Heah, Granny, lemme he'p yo' fix breakfas'.

GRANNY. Go 'way, chile. Yo' got a heap to do he'pin' Sonny all day in de field.

SISSY. Oh, that ain't nothin'. [*Pulling out the backless chair, then bringing up the orange box and turning it lengthwise so that she and* SONNY *can sit upon it.*]

SONNY [*patting Sissy's hand*]. Po' chile, Ah ain't gwine to have yo' wukin' dis er-way. 'Tain't right.

SISSY. Hush, chile, Granny's askin' de blessin'.

GRANNY [*bowing her head*]. Bress dis food we'se 'bout tuh receive fo' Christ's sake. Amen. [*She serves their plates generously of the bacon and grits and some gravy made with the bacon.*]

SONNY [*eating with his knife*]. Er, ah, Granny—

GRANNY. Sonny, de co'n meal's 'bout gone. Dere's enough fo' co'npone to-day.

SONNY [*laying down his knife*]. Sissy, don't lemme fergit to take some co'n meal when Ah goes tuh town to-morrow, Sat'day, ef us is heah.

SISSY. Ef us is heah? Whut yo' mean, Sonny?

GRANNY. He mean ef de Lawd's willin'. How come, chile, yo' don't tek Him into yo' plannin'?

SONNY [*absent-mindedly*]. No, Granny, Ah means jes' whut Ah say, ef all o' us is heah.

SISSY AND GRANNY [*looking at* SONNY *in amazement*]. Wha' we gwine tuh be?

SONNY [*hanging his head*]. Ah don't know how to tell yo' 'bout it. Ah been a-thinkin' an' a-plannin' an' skeered to let on.

SISSY [*impatiently*]. Whut's yo' talkin' 'bout?

SONNY [*doggedly*]. Ah'm talkin' 'bout leavin' heah.

GRANNY. How we goin' tuh leave? Wha' to? Hit teks heaps o' money to git away.

SONNY. Yo' don't have tuh have no money, no nuthin'. Jes' git away.

SISSY [*incredulous*]. How?

GRANNY. What's ailin' yo', boy?

SONNY. When Ah was in town las' Sat'day a whi' man done tol' me he was lookin' fo' wukers.

GRANNY. Whut whi' man?

SONNY. He said he was a 'cruiter. Lots a fo'ks ah talkin' 'bout him. Yo' all out heah in de country, yo' don't know nothin' 'bout whut's go'n' on. Ah'm tellin' yo'. He sez tuh me ez Ah was standin' in de Gen'ral Sto' kin' o' whisperin' lak: "Do yo' wan' tuh mek some money?"

GRANNY. Be keerful o' dese heady fo'ks. Dey ain't out fuh no good.

SONNY. But, Granny, he talked hones'.

GRANNY. Ah know dey ain't no mo' wuk roun' heah dan whut we all is doin'.

SONNY. But dis ain' 'round heah.

SISSY. Wha' is ut, Sonny?

SONNY. Up No'th.

SISSY [*lighting up*]. Up No'th?

GRANNY [*with scorn*]. Up No'th!

SONNY [*bubbling with enthusiasm*]. Yes. Up No'th—wha' we kin be treated lak fo'ks. He told me he would tek us all, tek us an' put us on de train at River Station below town, 'cause a deputy sheriff done 'rested a pa'cel o' niggahs, whut was tryin' tuh follow some other 'cruiter.

SISSY. Wha' he now? When could he come?

SONNY. He say he was comin' tuh see 'bout ut Friday, to-day. [*With hesitation.*] Dat's why Ah had to tell yo' all.

GRANNY. Up No'th? Sonny, dey tell me it's too col' up No'th.

SONNY. No, Granny, de 'cruiter say us kin live ez wa'm ez down heah—houses all het by steam. An' Sissy won't have to wuk in no fields neither, ner yo'.

GRANNY. But Ah done been down heah seventy-seven yeahs.

SONNY [*triumphantly*]. But, Granny, Ah won' have tuh leave yo' tuh fight de wa' 'gin dem Germans.

GRANNY. Who say so?

SONNY. De 'cruiter.

GRANNY. How he know?

SONNY. Oh—Ah jes' knows he knows. He sounds lak it when he talks.

SISSY. Sonny, why wouldn't yo' have to go tuh wa'?

SONNY. He say somethin' Ah don't quite git de meanin' ob, but Ah 'membahs dis. He say Ah could wuk in some kin' o' a—a 'nition factory, wha' dey meks guns an' things, tuh fight de Germans. Dat's why Ah wouldn't have to go.

GRANNY [*looking off into space and tapping her foot slowly*]. But yo' can't believe dese whi' fo'ks. Dey're sich liars.

SONNY. But he's tellin' de troof.

SISSY. Ah hope he's tellin' de troof.

SONNY [*emphatically*]. He is. He's talkin' sense.

GRANNY. Eat yo' breakfus', chillun. Hit's gittin' col'. 'Spec yo'll nebbah heah any mo' fum dat 'cruiter. [*They begin to eat.* GRANNY *gets up to get some hot grits, carrying the pot around and replenishing each plate.*]

SONNY [*his mouth full*]. We wuk—wuk—wuk. Whut does us git fo' ut? Ouah victuals an' keep. De mules git dat. We ain't no better'n de mules down heah.

GRANNY. Yo' ain't seen no slavery days, Sonny.

SONNY. Why, slavery days ah right heah now.

GRANNY. Dey can't sell yo'.

SONNY. But dey kin buy us. Ole Mistah Bob thinks he's done bought us. Dey put bloodhounds on some po' niggah who was tryin' tuh leave ol' man Popperil's plantation. Whut's dat but slavery?

SISSY. But, Sonny, Lincum done set us free. Didn't he, Granny?

GRANNY. 'Course he did. Sonny know dat.

SONNY. He ain't sot me free. [*An automobile horn is heard at a distance.*]

SONNY [*jumping from the orange crate and speaking joyfully*]. Dere now. Whut did Ah say? Ah bet dat's him, de 'cruiter.

GRANNY. Comin' on Friday. No day to mek new business on Friday. Bad luck's bound to follow yo'.

SISSY. 'Pears lak tuh me bad luck's been follering us. [*The horn sounds near. They all go to the door to look.*] There 'tis, comin' down de road lickity-split.

SONNY. Sho' nuf! Sissy, da hit is, an' hit sho' looks lak de 'cruiter's cah.

GRANNY. Looks say nuthin'.

SONNY. See. He's stoppin' right by ouah place.

SISSY. Sho' is. [*A brisk voice is heard.*] Hey there!—[*Steps sound.* THE WHITE MAN *is seen coming down the path. He stops in front of the open door, hat on and wearing gloves. He talks rapidly and with finality.*]

THE WHITE MAN. This woman your wife?

SONNY. Yas, this is her, Mr. 'Cruiter, an' hyah is mah Granny. [*Granny nods her head coldly.*]

THE WHITE MAN. Well, everything is ready. I came through the country early this morning to avoid other cars on the road. If you say the word I will be back here after you about eleven o'clock to-night. Don't miss this opportunity, folks.

GRANNY. Yo' don't know whut yo're axin', Mistah 'Cruiter.

THE WHITE MAN. Why, Missus, I am giving this boy a chance to get out, to be a man, like anybody else, make plenty money and have time to enjoy it. [*Turning to* SISSY.] What do you say? Don't you want to live like a lady and wear fine clothes?

SISSY [*grinning bashfully*]. Yas, sir.

SONNY. 'Course, Mr. 'Cruiter, Ah sho' wants tuh go.

THE WHITE MAN. You know there are many jumping at the chance.

GRANNY. Honey, yo' can't tell him now. Whut yo' gwine tuh do wif yo' things?

SONNY. Us ain't got nothin' nohow, Granny.

THE WHITE MAN [*looking at his watch*]. Well, I must hurry. Tell you what I'll do. I have to come down the road to-night anyway as far as the adjoining plantation.

SISSY [*turning to Granny*]. Mistah Popperil's place.

THE WHITE MAN. I'll blow the horn three times. If you want to come I'll take you. Don't miss this chance of your lifetime. Good wages, transportation to Detroit straight, a good job waiting for you and freedom. [*He leaves hastily.*]

GRANNY [*sinks down on the steps*]. Huh! [SISSY *looks at* SONNY *expectantly.* SONNY *stands undecided, scratching his head. The automobile is heard leaving in the distance, down the big road.*]

GRANNY [*singing*].

Nobody knows de trouble Ah've seen,
Nobody knows but Jesus.

[SISSY *and* SONNY *stand looking on the ground.*] 'Twan't be right fo' tuh run dat er-way—widout tellin' nobody. 'Tain't Christian, Sonny.

SONNY. Ah ain't stud'in' 'bout Christian.

GRANNY. Yo' talk lak a po' sinnah, boy.

SISSY. Well, Granny, let us try it. Come on.

GRANNY. Ef we leave dis place dis a-way, we dasn't come back, even ef yo' didn't lak it.

SONNY. Ah wish Ah knowed whut tuh do.

GRANNY. Yo' ain't got no faith, son. Yo' ought tuh trust God, lak us did way back dar in slavery days. An' He heard ouah prayahs.

SISSY. Sonny prays, Granny.

SONNY. But Ah nevah gits no answer.

SISSY. Mebbe dis is an answer.

SONNY [*looking at the heavens*]. De sun's risin'. Even ef we go we got tuh keep on wukin' to-day, 'cause ol' Mistah Bob's liable to come heah any time.

GRANNY. Sonny, Sissy, Ah can't leave dis place. Why, bress me, my mammy's died heah, ol' Missus is buried heah, yo' gran'daddy crossed ovah Jordan in dis ve'y house, yo' own po' mammy, atter yo' worthless pappy was kilt in de cotton mill, died heah too. Ah'm too puny to leave heah now, too far gone mahself.

SONNY. Granny, ain't Ah allus wuked and he'p to tek kere o' yo' evah sence Ah been big enough to hoe a row?

GRANNY. Yo' has been a mighty dutiful chile, Sonny. Ah ain't sayin' nuttin' 'gin yo', honey. Ah ain't wantin' tuh stan' in yo' light. But Ah can't he'p ut. Ah can't beah tuh leave heah, wha all mah fo'ks ah a-layin' an' go 'way 'mongst heathen people.

SISSY. But, Granny, you'd be happy wif us, won't yo'?

GRANNY. Yas, chile, Ah'd be happy all right, but Ah'm lak Ephraim, Ah reckon, wedded to mah idols. [*Forcing the words.*] Yo'-all go 'long an' lemme stah heah.

SONNY [*fiercely*]. But, Granny, yo' know how Mistah Bob's gwine tuh tek it, when he fin's us done gone. Ah nevah 'd feel safe leavin' yo' behin'.

GRANNY. Dat's a'right. Ain't Ah wuked fo' he's pappy?

SONNY. He ain't keerin' fo' 'at. He's liable to th'ow yo' out wif nuttin'.

GRANNY. Ain't dis mah cabin? [*Looks around tenderly.*] Ain't Ah lived heah fo' fifty yeahs?

SONNY. But it's on Mistah Bob's lan'.

GRANNY. Yo' kin sen' me some money an' excusin' de asthma an' de misery in mah head Ah kin keep a youngah 'oman dan me pantin', when it come tuh wuk.

SISSY. Granny, yo' mus' come wid us.

SONNY. Ah can't think o' leavin' yo' behin'.

GRANNY [*getting up from the steps and walking wearily into the kitchen*]. Don't pester me now. Mebbe—mebbe—Ah knowed trouble was comin', seein' dem[illegible] de elements.

SISSY [*whispers to* SONNY]. She say "Mebbe[illegible]

SONNY [*whispering*]. Ah wished Ah knowed[illegible]

GRANNY [*looking up and seeing them whispering*]. Go long, chillun, yo' needn't be keepin' secrets fum yo' ol' Granny. Mebbe yo're right; mebbe Ah'm right. Dis is a cu'ios worl' anyhow. But dat whi' man ain't come back yit. Dey ain't tekin' niggahs on steam cahs fo' nuttin'. Whi' fo'ks is whi' fo'ks.

SONNY. Well, Granny, we'll see.

GRANNY. Ah'll fix yo'-all's dinner an' bring it down yonder to de bottom tree.

SONNY [to SISSY]. Come on, Sissy, us'll put in one day more anyhow. [*They leave. As the sound of their footsteps ceases the rooster is heard to crow again.*]

GRANNY [*going to the door*]. Plague tek yo' honery self. [*Picks up a spoon and throws in direction of the sound.*] Cl'ar out a heah—crowin' up company. Ah don't need no 'cruiters. [*She becomes silent and then sings.*] Down in de Valley—Couldn't heah mah Jesus, Couldn't heah nobody pray, O Lord!—

Curtain

SCENE II

SAME PLACE: *Ten forty-five that night. The faint glow of the kerosene lamp accentuates the desolate shadows.* GRANNY *is sitting on the backless chair, her hands folded.* SISSY *is packing clothes in an old dress suitcase. A big bag with a string tied around it rests beside* GRANNY. SONNY, *dressed in overalls and a gray coat, walks back and forth as he talks.*

GRANNY. He ain't comin'.

SONNY. 'Tain't time yit. [*Looking at his dollar watch.*] It's only a quarter tuh 'leven.

GRANNY. He ain't comin', Ah say.

SONNY. Don't put a bad mouf on us, Granny.

SISSY [*to* SONNY]. Come heah, he'p me shet dis thing. [SONNY *helps her close the stuffed suitcase.*]

GRANNY. Bad mouf, chile, Ah's been sittin' heah prayin' fo' yo'-all. We ain't nuttin', but wif de ol' Marster we ah pow'ful strong.

SISSY [*holding her head*]. Mah head's turnin' 'round all in a whirl.

SONNY. Ah yo' ready, Granny?

GRANNY. Reckon so.

SISSY. Do yo' think he's comin'?

SONNY. Sho'.

GRANNY [*shaking her head*]. Can't keep fum thinkin' 'bout yo' mammy, how she wouldn't wan' yo' tuh leab heah dis a-way.

SONNY. Ah believe she'd wan' us tuh go.

SISSY. Whut yo' all talkin' 'bout sich fo'? Yo' mak me skeert.

GRANNY. 'Tain't no use bein' skeert. Yo' got tuh face de ol' Marster some o' dese times.

SISSY. Oh, Ah ain't skeert o' no ol' Marster, but yo' mek me think o' ghos'es.

SONNY. Ah'm skeert o' de clutches o' ol' Mistah Bob. He don't mean us no good. Ah jes' know ef mammy an' pappy could speak dey'd shoo us on.

GRANNY. How yo' know so much?

SONNY. Ain't Ah done seed de way he looked at niggahs —wicked lak he could swallow 'em whole?

GRANNY [*sighs*]. Lordy! Lordy!

SISSY. Whut time is it, Sonny?

SONNY [*looking at his watch*]. Ten tuh 'leven.

GRANNY [*singing*]. O Lordy, Lordy, won't yo' ketch mah groan.

SONNY. Us ain't goin' tuh no funeral, Granny. Ah feels lak it's a picnic—a 'Mancipation Celebration picnic.

SISSY. Ah'm rarin' tuh go, too, 'specially sence yo' tol' me 'bout de schools up yonder. Ouah chillun kin go tuh whi' fo'ks' school.

GRANNY. Whi' fo'ks ain' goin' treat niggahs wif book learnin' any better'n we-all.

SONNY. We kin treat each othah bettah den. Ah kin treat mahself bettah. An' so kin mah chillun.

GRANNY. Yo' young niggahs ah sho' uppity, but ah hope yo' ain't got no wool ovah yo' eyes.

GRANNY. We mought a sont ouah chickens tuh Sis Ca'line.

SISSY. She mought a tol' somebody, too, an' dere we'd be.

GRANNY. Yo' got dat box fixed for Berry?

SONNY. He's already in ut. He ain't used tuh bein' shut up lak dat, de lazy varmint.

GRANNY [*walks to the door and looks out*]. The stars ah shinin'. [*Comes back and gets a drink from the bucket.*]

SISSY [*excitedly*]. Sakes alive! Ah see de lights a-comin', 'mobile lights.

SONNY [*running to the door*]. She is. We goin' fum heah.

GRANNY [*moodily silent. The glare from the headlights of the automobile lights up the room, shining in through the open door.* GRANNY *looks in wonder at the light*]. Ah, chillun, de Lawd is wif us. [*Sings.*]

Shine on me. Let de light fum de lighthouse
shine on me.

[*The chug of the engine is heard and the grinding of the brakes, as the car pulls up. The horn blows three times.* THE WHITE MAN *runs down the walk.*]

THE WHITE MAN. Are you ready? We have no time to lose.

SONNY. We's waitin'. [*Gathers up bag, suitcase and hat and starts towards the door.*]

SISSY. Don't forgit Berry.

THE WHITE MAN. Who's Berry?

SISSY. De dog.

THE WHITE MAN. What do you mean? We can't take dogs on this trip.

GRANNY. Whut's de mattah wif yo', man? Think we're goin' tuh leave Berry?

THE WHITE MAN. See here. It is impossible to take any dog. He'll make too much noise and besides I can't be bothered looking out for him.

SONNY. Well, Berry'll have tuh stay heah, dat's all.

GRANNY. Den Ah stays too.

SONNY. Whut yo' say?

GRANNY [*stubbornly*]. Ah ain't goin' tuh leave Berry.

THE WHITE MAN. Ah, come on—cut the argument. We got to make that train.

SISSY [*worried*]. He kin fend fo' hisself.

GRANNY. Go on, yo' chillun, go on. Ah don't wan' tuh go nohow. Ah jes' been a-pretendin' tuh git yo' started. Ah kin git along. Ain't Ah got along wif whi' fo'ks fo' seventy yeahs an' mo'?

SONNY [*angrily*]. Whut yo' wan' tuh act dis a-way fo'?

THE WHITE MAN. Well, come on or stay, people. Time's passing.

SONNY. Ah'm goin', Granny. Don't yo' see Ah can't stay heah? Ef Ah stay Ah'm goin' tuh git kilt fo' sassin' dese whi' fo'ks; ef Ah go tuh wa', Ah has tuh leave yo' jes' de same an' mebbe git kilt. Ef Ah go No'th and die, Ah'll be a dead free man. [*He puts down bundles and embraces* GRANNY.] Mah po' ol' Granny. Ah'm goin' tuh send yo' plenty a money an' Ah'll be back, come Christmas, mebbe, to tek yo' atter we gits settled.

GRANNY [*frightened*]. Don't, don't come back, not heah. Promise me dat, chile. Yo' know Mistah Bob. He git yo'.

SONNY. No, he won't. Ah'll show him.

THE WHITE MAN [*impatiently*]. We must be going.

SISSY. Fo' God, Granny, come on.

GRANNY [*firmly*]. Ah done said mah say.

SONNY. Den, good-by, Granny. [*Gives her money.*] Ah send yo' plenty mo' fust pay-day, an' Ah'm goin' tuh have a pay-day ebery week.

SISSY [*kissing* GRANNY]. Good-by.

GRANNY [*her arms around them both*]. Mah po' chillun. Mah po' chillun. [*They tear themselves from her embrace.* THE WHITE MAN *leads the way to the car.* SONNY *takes up the suitcase, but leaves the bag.* SISSY *follows. The sound of the three pairs of footsteps dies away.*]

SONNY and SISSY [*calling from the car*]. Granny?

GRANNY [*standing in the doorway*]. Chillun.

SISSY. Pray fo' us, Granny. [*The car is heard lurching ahead. The light disappears. The sounds die away.* GRANNY *stands for a minute in the deep silence, looking in the direction of the vanished car. A whining is heard. She looks out in the darkness.*]

GRANNY. Bress mah soul! Berry! [*She pulls in a crated box, containing the cur. She gets a poker and pries the box open. The dog is wild with appreciation.*] Come heah, Berry. [*Pulls up the backless chair by the table and sits down, patting the dog.*] Berry, you'se all Ah got lef' now. [*Rests her elbow on the table, shuts her eyes.*] Lordy, Ah'm so tiahed, so tiahed. [*She sits up suddenly, listening attentively.*] Who dat knockin' at mah do'? [*She gets up slowly and looks out. Nothing. Shuts the door and bolts it. Sits down again and buries her face in her hands. Again she raises up and listens.*] Who dat, knockin' ag'in? [*Once more she gets up more painfully, unbolts and opens the door. Nothing. Closing it she totters feebly to the chair.*] Berry, Ah'm tuckered out. [*Croons.*] "Somebody knockin' at mah do'!" [*Stops. Listens.*] Come in. [*Falls back in chair, her head rests on the table, her arms limp. She mumbles.*] Come in, 'Cruiter. Reckon Ah'm all ready.

Curtain

POETRY

IMAGINATION

By PHYLLIS WHEATLEY

Imagination! Who can sing thy force?
Or who describe the swiftness of thy course?
Soaring through air to find the bright abode,
Th' empyreal palace of the thundering God,
We on thy pinions can surpass the wind,
And leave the rolling universe behind:
From star to star the mental optics rove,
Measure the skies, and range the realms above;
There in one view we grasp the mighty whole,
Or with new world amaze th' unbounded soul.

Selection from

THE RAPE OF FLORIDA

By ALBERT A. WHITMAN

"Come now, my love, the moon is on the lake;
Upon the waters is my light canoe;
Come with me, love, and gladsome oars shall make
A music on the parting wave for you.
Come o'er the waters deep and dark and blue;
Come where the lilies in the marge have sprung,
Come with me, love, for oh, my love is true!"
This is the song that on the lake was sung,
The boatman sang it when his heart was young.

SELECTION FROM

POEM ADDRESSED TO WOMEN

By FRANCES E. HARPER

You can sigh o'er the sad-eyed Armenian
  Who weeps in her desolate home,
You can mourn o'er the exile of Russia
  From kindred and friends doomed to roam.

But hark! from our Southland are floating
  Sobs of anguish, murmurs of pain,
And women heart-stricken are weeping
  O'er their tortured and slain.

Have ye not, oh, my favored sisters,
  Just a plea, a prayer or a tear
For mothers who dwell 'neath the shadows
  Of agony, hatred and fear?

Weep not, oh, my well-sheltered sisters,
  Weep not for the Negro alone,
But weep for your sons who must gather
  The crops which their fathers have sown.

THE PROGRESS OF LIBERTY

By JAMES MADISON BELL

O LIBERTY, what charm so great!
  One radiant smile, one of thine,
Can change the drooping bondsman's fate,
  And light his brow with hope divine.
His manhood, wrapped in rayless gloom,
  At thy approach throws off its pall,
And rising up, as from the tomb,
  Stands forth defiant of the thrall.

No tyrant's power can crush the soul
  Illumined by thine inspiring ray;
The fiendishness of base control
  Flies thy approach as night from day.

Ride onward, in thy chariot ride,
  Thou peerless queen; ride on, ride on—
With Truth and Justice by thy side!—
  From pole to pole, from sun to sun!
Nor linger in our bleeding South,
  Nor domicile with race or clan;
But in thy glorious goings forth,
  Be thy benignant object Man—

Of every clime, of every hue,
  Of every tongue, of every race,
'Neath heaven's broad, ethereal blue;
Oh! let thy radiant smiles embrace,
Till neither slave nor one oppressed
  Remain throughout creation's span,
By thee unpitied and unblest,
  Of all the progeny of man.

We fain would have the world aspire
  To that proud height of free desire
That flamed the heart of Switzer's Tell
 (Whose archery skill none could excel),
When once upon his Alpine brow,
  He stood reclining on his bow,
And saw, careering in his might—
  In all his majesty of flight—
A lordly eagle float and swing
  Upon his broad, untrammeled wing.
He bent his bow, he poised his dart,
  With full intent to pierce the heart;
But as the proud bird nearer drew,
  His stalwart arm unsteady grew,

His arrow lingered in the groove—
The cord unwilling seemed to move,
For there he saw personified
That freedom which had been his pride;
And as the eagle onward sped,
O'er lofty hill and towering tree,
He dropped his bow, he bowed his head;
He could not shoot—'twas Liberty!

THE BAND OF GIDEON

By JOSEPH S. COTTER, JR.

The band of Gideon roam the sky,
The howling wind is their war-cry,
The thunder's roll is their trump's peal,
And the lightning's flash their vengeful steel.
Each black cloud
Is a fiery steed.
And they cry aloud
With each strong deed,
"The sword of the Lord and Gideon."

And men below rear temples high
And mock their God with reasons why,
And live in arrogance, sin and shame,
And rape their souls for the world's good name.
Each black cloud
Is a fiery steed.
And they cry aloud
With each strong deed,
"The sword of the Lord and Gideon."

The band of Gideon roam the sky
And view the earth with baleful eye;
In holy wrath they scourge the land
With earthquake, storm and burning brand.

Each black cloud
Is a fiery steed.
And they cry aloud
With each strong deed,
"The sword of the Lord and Gideon."

The lightnings flash and the thunders roll,
And "Lord have mercy on my soul,"
Cry men as they fall on the stricken sod,
In agony searching for their God.
Each black cloud
Is a fiery steed.
And they cry aloud
With each strong deed,
"The sword of the Lord and Gideon."

And men repent and then forget
That heavenly wrath they ever met,
The band of Gideon yet will come
And strike their tongues of blasphemy dumb.
Each black cloud
Is a fiery steed.
And they cry aloud
With each strong deed,
"The sword of the Lord and Gideon."

AT THE CLOSED GATE OF JUSTICE

By JAMES D. CORROTHERS

To be a Negro in a day like this
Demands forgiveness. Bruised with blow on blow,
Betrayed, like him whose woe-dimmed eyes gave bliss
Still must one succor those who brought one low,
To be a Negro in a day like this.

To be a Negro in a day like this
Demands rare patience—patience that can wait

In utter darkness. 'Tis the path to miss,
And knock, unheeded, at an iron gate,
To be a Negro in a day like this.

To be a Negro in a day like this
Demands strange loyalty. We serve a flag
Which is to us white freedom's emphasis.
Ah! one must love when Truth and Justice lag,
To be a Negro in a day like this.

To be a Negro in a day like this—
Alas! Lord God, what evil have we done?
Still shines the gate, all gold and amethyst,
But I pass by, the glorious goal unwon,
"Merely a Negro"—in a day like this!

ROBERT GOULD SHAW

By PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Why was it that the thunder voice of Fate
Should call thee, studious, from the classic groves,
Where calm-eyed Pallas with still footstep roves,
And charge thee seek the turmoil of the state?
What bade thee hear the voice and rise elate,

Leave home and kindred and thy spicy loaves,
To lead th' unlettered and despisèd droves
To manhood's home and thunder at the gate?

Far better the slow blaze of Learning's Light,
The cool and quiet of her dearer fane,
Than this hot terror of a hopeless fight,
This cold endurance of the final pain,—
Since thou and those who with thee died for right
Have died, the Present teaches, but in vain!

ODE TO ETHIOPIA

By PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

O Mother Race! to thee I bring
This pledge of faith unwavering,
  This tribute to thy glory.
I know the pangs which thou didst feel,
When Slavery crushed thee with its heel,
  With thy dear blood all gory.

Sad days were those—ah, sad indeed!
But through the land the fruitful seed
  Of better times was growing.
The plant of freedom upward sprung,
And spread its leaves so fresh and young—
  Its blossoms now are blowing.

On every hand in this fair land,
Proud Ethiope's swarthy children stand
  Beside their fairer neighbor;
The forests flee before their stroke,
Their hammers ring, their forges smoke,—
  They stir in honest labor.

They tread the fields where honor calls;
Their voices sound through senate halls
  In majesty and power.
To right they cling; the hymns they sing
Up to the skies in beauty ring,
  And bolder grow each hour.

Be proud, my Race, in mind and soul;
Thy name is writ on Glory's scroll
  In characters of fire.
High 'mid the clouds of Fame's bright sky
Thy banner's blazoned folds now fly,
  And truth shall lift them higher.

Thou hast the right to noble pride,
Whose spotless robes were purified
  By blood's severe baptism.
Upon thy brow the cross was laid,
And labor's painful sweat-beads made
  A consecrating chrism.

No other race, or white or black,
When bound as thou wert, to the rack,
  So seldom stooped to grieving;
No other race, when free again,
Forgot the past and proved them men
  So noble in forgiving.

Go on and up! Our souls and eyes
Shall follow thy continuous rise;
  Our ears shall list thy story
From bards who from thy root shall spring,
And proudly tune their lyres to sing
  Of Ethiopia's glory.

WHEN MALINDY SINGS

By PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

G'way an' quit dat noise, Miss Lucy—
  Put dat music book away;
What's de use to keep on tryin'?
  Ef you practice twell you're gray,
You cain't sta't no notes a-flyin'
  Lak de ones dat rants and rings
F'om the kitchen to de big woods
  When Malindy sings.

You ain't got de nachel o'gans
  Fu' to make de soun' come right,
You ain't got de tu'ns an' twistin's
  Fu' to make it sweet an' light.

Tell you one thing now, Miss Lucy,
An' I'm tellin' you fu' true,
When hit comes to raal right singin',
Tain't no easy thing to do.

Easy 'nough fu' folks to hollah,
Lookin' at de lines an' dots,
When dey ain't no one kin sense it,
An' de chune comes in, in spots;
But fu' real melojous music,
Dat jes' strikes yo' hea't and clings,
Jes' you stan' an' listen wif me
When Malindy sings.

Ain't you nevah hyeahd Malindy?
Blessed soul, tek up de cross!
Look hyeah, ain't you jokin', honey?
Well, you don't know whut you los'.
Y' ought to hyeah dat gal a-wa'blin',
Robins, la'ks, an' all dem things,
Heish dey moufs an' hides dey faces
When Malindy sings.

Fiddlin' man jes' stop his fiddlin',
Lay his fiddle on de she'f;
Mockin'-bird quit try'n' to whistle,
'Cause he jes' so shamed hisse'f.
Folks a-playin' on de banjo
Draps dey fingahs on de strings—
Bless yo' soul—fu'gits to move 'em,
When Malindy sings.

She jes' spreads huh mouf and hollahs,
"Come to Jesus," twell you hyeah
Sinnahs' tremblin' steps and voices,
Timid-lak a-drawin' neah;

Den she tu'ns to "Rock of Ages,"
  Simply to de cross she clings,
An' you fin' yo' teahs a-drappin'
  When Malindy sings.

Who dat says dat humble praises
  Wif de Master nevah counts?
Heish yo' mouf, I hyeah dat music,
  Ez hit rises up an' mounts—
Floatin' by de hills an' valleys,
  Way above dis buryin' sod,
Ez hit makes its way in glory
  To de very gates of God!

Oh, hit's sweetah dan de music
  Of an edicated band;
An' hit's dearah dan de battle's
  Song o' triumph in de lan'.
It seems holier dan evenin'
  When de solemn chu'ch bell rings,
Ez I sit an' ca'mly listen
  While Malindy sings.

Towsah, stop dat ba'kin', hyeah me!
  Mandy, mek dat chile keep still;
Don't you hyeah de echoes callin'
  F'om de valley to de hill?
Let me listen, I can hyeah it,
  Th'oo de bresh of angels' wings,
Sof' an' sweet, "Swing low, Sweet Chariot,"
  Ez Malindy sings.

THE NEW DAY

By FENTON JOHNSON

From a vision red with war I awoke and saw the Prince of Peace hovering over No Man's Land.

Loud the whistles blew and the thunder of cannon was drowned by the happy shouting of the people.
From the Sinai that faces Armageddon I heard this chant from the throats of white-robed angels:

Blow your trumpets, little children!
From the East and from the West,
From the cities in the valley,
From God's dwelling on the mountain,
Blow your blast that Peace might know
She is Queen of God's great army.
With the crying blood of millions
We have written deep her name
In the Book of all the Ages;
With the lilies in the valley,
With the roses by the Mersey,
With the golden flower of Jersey
We have crowned her smooth young temples.
Where her footsteps cease to falter
Golden grain will greet the morning,
Where her chariot descends
Shall be broken down the altars
Of the gods of dark disturbance.
Nevermore shall men know suffering,
Nevermore shall women wailing
Shake to grief the God of Heaven.
From the East and from the West,
From the cities in the valley,
From God's dwelling on the mountain,
Little children, blow your trumpets!

From Ethiopia, groaning 'neath her heavy burdens, I heard the music of the old slave songs.
I heard the wail of warriors, dusk brown, who grimly fought the fight of others in the trenches of Mars.
I heard the plea of blood-stained men of dusk and the crimson in my veins leapt furiously.

Forget not, O my brothers, how we fought
In No Man's Land that peace might come again!
Forget not, O my brothers, how we gave
Red blood to save the freedom of the world!
We were not free, our tawny hands were tied;
But Belgium's plight and Serbia's woes we shared
Each rise of sun or setting of the moon.
So when the bugle blast had called us forth
We went not like the surly brute of yore
But, as the Spartan, proud to give the world
The freedom that we never knew nor shared.
These chains, O brothers mine, have weighed
us down
As Samson in the temple of the gods;
Unloosen them and let us breathe the air
That makes the goldenrod the flower of Christ.
For we have been with thee in No Man's Land,
Through lake of fire and down to Hell itself;
And now we ask of thee our liberty,
Our freedom in the land of Stars and Stripes.

I am glad that the Prince of peace is hovering over No Man's Land.

I WANT TO DIE WHILE YOU LOVE ME

By GEORGIA DOUGLAS JOHNSON

I WANT to die while you love me,
While yet you hold me fair,
While laughter lies upon my lips
And lights are in my hair.

I want to die while you love me
And bear to that still bed
Your kisses turbulent, unspent
To warm me when I'm dead.

I want to die while you love me
  Oh, who would care to live
Till love has nothing more to ask
  And nothing more to give?

I want to die while you love me
  And never, never see
The glory of this perfect day
  Grow dim or cease to be!

FOR THE CANDLE LIGHT

By ANGELINA WELD GRIMKÉ

The sky was blue, so blue that day
  And each daisy white, so white,
Oh, I knew that no more could rains fall gray—
  And night again be night.

I *knew,* I *knew*. Well, if night is night,
  And the gray skies grayly cry,
I have in a book for the candle light,
  A daisy dead and dry.

TO YOU WHO READ MY BOOK

By COUNTEE CULLEN

Soon every sprinter,
  However fleet,
Comes to a winter
  Of sure defeat:
Though he may race
  Like the hunted doe,
Time has a pace
  To lay him low.

Soon we who sing,
  However high,
Must face the Thing
  We cannot fly.
Yea, though we fling
  Our notes to the sun,
Time will outsing
  Us every one.

All things must change
  As the wind is blown;
Time will estrange
  The flesh from the bone.
The dream shall elude
  The dreamer's clasp,
And only its hood
  Shall comfort his grasp.

A little while,
  Too brief at most,
And even my smile
  Will be a ghost.
A little space,
  A Finger's crook,
And who shall trace
  The path I took?

Who shall declare
  My whereabouts;
Say if in the air
  My being shouts
Along light ways,
  Or if in the sea,
Or deep earth stays
  The germ of me?

Ah, none knows, none,
  Save (but too well)
The Cryptic One
  Who will not tell.
This is my hour
  To wax and climb,

Flaunt a red flower
  In the face of time.
And only an hour
  Time gives, then snap
Goes the flower,
  And dried is the sap.

Juice of the first
  Grapes of my vine,
I proffer your thirst
  My own heart's wine.
Here of my growing
  A red rose sways,
Seed of my sowing,
  And work of my days.

(I run, but time's
  Abreast with me;
I sing, but he climbs
  With my highest C.)

Drink while my blood
  Colors the wine,
Reach while the bud
  Is still on the vine. . . .

Then . . .
  When the hawks of death
Tear at my throat
  Till song and breath
Ebb, note by note

Turn to this book
Of the mellow word
For a singing look
At the stricken bird.

Say, "This is the way
He chirped and sung,
In the sweet heyday
When his heart was young.
Though his throat is bare,
By death defiled,
Song labored there
And bore a child."

When the dreadful Ax
Rives me apart,
When the sharp wedge cracks
My arid heart,
Turn to this book
Of the singing me
For a springtime look
At the wintry tree.

Say, "Thus it was weighed
With flower and fruit,
Ere the Ax was laid
Unto its root.
Though the blows fall free
On a gnarled trunk now,
Once he was a tree
With a blossomy bough."

TO JOHN KEATS, POET AT SPRINGTIME[1]

By COUNTEE CULLEN

I CANNOT hold my peace, John Keats;
There never was a spring like this;
It is an echo, that repeats
My last year's song and next year's bliss.
I know, in spite of all men say
Of Beauty, you have felt her most.
Yea, even in your grave her way
Is laid. Poor, troubled, lyric ghost,
Spring never was so fair and dear
As Beauty makes her seem this year.

I cannot hold my peace, John Keats,
I am as helpless in the toil
Of Spring as any lamb that bleats
To feel the solid earth recoil
Beneath his puny legs. Spring beats
Her tocsin call to those who love her,
And lo! the dogwood petals cover
Her breast with drifts of snow, and sleek
White gulls fly screaming to her, and hover
About her shoulders, and kiss her cheek,
While white and purple lilacs muster
A strength that bears them to a cluster
Of color and odor; for her sake
All things that slept are now awake.
And you and I, shall we lie still,
John Keats, while Beauty summons us?
Somehow I feel your sensitive will
Is pulsing up some tremulous

[1] For Carl Van Vechten.

Sap road of a maple tree, whose leaves
Grow music as they grow, since your
Wild voice is in them, a harp that grieves
For life that opens death's dark door.
Though dust, your fingers still can push
The Vision Splendid to a birth,
Though now they work as grass in the hush
Of the night on the broad sweet page of the earth.

"John Keats is dead," they say, but I
Who hear your full insistent cry
In bud and blossom, leaf and tree,
Know John Keats still writes poetry.
And while my head is earthward bowed
To read new life sprung from your shroud,
Folks seeing me must think it strange
That merely spring should so derange
My mind. They do now know that you,
John Keats, keep revel with me, too.

HERITAGE

By COUNTEE CULLEN

What is Africa to me:
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

So I lie, who all day long
Want no sound except the song
Sung by wild barbaric birds
Goading massive jungle herds,
Juggernauts of flesh that pass
Trampling tall, defiant grass
Where young forest lovers lie,
Plighting troth beneath the sky.
So I lie, who always hear,
Though I cram against my ear
Both my thumbs, and keep them there,
Great drums throbbing through the air.
So I lie, whose fount of pride,
Dear distress, and joy allied,
Is my somber flesh and skin,
With the dark blood dammed within
Like great pulsing tides of wine
That, I fear, must burst the fine
Channels of the chafing net
Where they surge and foam and fret.

Africa? A book one thumbs
Listlessly, till slumber comes.
Unremembered are her bats
Circling through the night, her cats
Crouching in the river reeds,
Stalking gentle flesh that feeds
By the river brink; no more
Does the bugle-throated roar
Cry that monarch claws have leapt
From the scabbards where they slept.
Silver snakes that once a year
Doff the lovely coats you wear,
Seek no covert in your fear
Lest a mortal eye should see;
What's your nakedness to me?

Here no leprous flowers rear
Fierce corollas in the air;
Here no bodies sleek and wet,
Dripping mingled rain and sweat,
Tread the savage measures of
Jungle boys and girls in love.
What is last year's snow to me,
Last year's anything? The tree
Budding yearly must forget
How its past arose or set—
Bough and blossom, flower, fruit,
Even what shy bird with mute
Wonder at her travail there,
Meekly labored in its hair.
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

So I lie, who find no peace
Night or day, no slight release
From the unremittent beat
Made by cruel padded feet
Walking through my body's street.
Up and down they go, and back,
Treading out a jungle track.
So I lie, who never quite
Safely sleep from rain at night—
I can never rest at all
When the rain begins to fall;
Like a soul gone mad with pain
I must match its weird refrain;
Ever must I twist and squirm,
Writhing like a baited worm,
While its primal measures drip
Through my body, crying, "Strip!

Doff this new exuberance.
Come and dance the Lover's Dance!"
In an old remembered way
Rain works on me night and day.

Quaint, outlandish heathen gods
Black men fashion out of rods,
Clay, and brittle bits of stone,
In a likeness like their own,
My conversion came high-priced;
I belong to Jesus Christ,
Preacher of humility;
Heathen gods are naught to me.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
So I make an idle boast;
Jesus of the twice-turned cheek,
Lamb of God, although I speak
With my mouth thus, in my heart
Do I play a double part?

Ever at Thy glowing altar
Must my heart grow sick and falter,
Wishing He I served were black,
Thinking then it would not lack
Precedent of pain to guide it,
Let who would or might deride it;
Surely then this flesh would know
Yours had borne a kindred woe.
Lord, I fashion dark gods, too,
Daring even to give You
Dark despairing features where,
Crowned with dark rebellious hair,
Patience wavers just so much as
Mortal grief compels, while touches
Quick and hot, of anger, rise
To smitten cheek and weary eyes.

Lord, forgive me if my need
Sometimes shapes a human creed.

All day long and all night through,
One thing only must I do:
Quench my pride and cool my blood,
Lest I perish in the flood.
Lest a hidden ember set
Timber that I thought was wet
Burning like the dryest flax,
Melting like merest wax,
Lest the grave restore its dead.
Not yet has my heart or head
In the least way realized
They and I are civilized.

TO A BROWN GIRL

By COUNTEE CULLEN

What if his glance is bold and free,
  His mouth the lash of whips?
So should the eyes of lovers be,
  And so a lover's lips.

What if no Puritanic strain
  Confines him to the nice?
He will not pass this way again
  Nor hunger for you twice.

Since in the end consort together
  Magdalen and Mary,
Youth is the time for careless weather;
  Later, lass, be wary.

TO A BROWN BOY

By COUNTEE CULLEN

That brown girl's swagger gives a twitch
To beauty like a queen;
Lad, never dam your body's itch
When loveliness is seen.

For there is ample room for bliss
In pride in clean, brown limbs,
And lips know better how to kiss
Than how to raise white hymns.

And when your body's death gives birth
To soil for spring to crown,
Men will not ask if that rare earth
Was white flesh once, or brown.

TABLEAU

By COUNTEE CULLEN

Locked arm in arm they cross the way,
The black boy and the white,
The golden splendor of the day,
The sable pride of night.

From lowered blinds the dark folk stare,
And here the fair folk talk,
Indignant that these two should dare
In unison to walk.

Oblivious to look and word
They pass, and see no wonder
That lightning brilliant as a sword
Should blaze the path of thunder.

IN MEMORY OF COLONEL CHARLES YOUNG

By COUNTEE CULLEN

Along the shore the tall, thin grass
That fringes that dark river,
While sinuously soft feet pass,
Begins to bleed and quiver.

The great dark voice breaks with a sob
Across the womb of night;
Above your grave the tom-toms throb,
And the hills are weird with light.

The great dark heart is like a well
Drained bitter by the sky,
And all the honeyed lies they tell
Come there to thirst and die.

No lie is strong enough to kill
The roots that work below;
From your rich dust and slaughtered will
A tree with tongues will grow.

SCINTILLA

By WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

I kissed a kiss in youth
Upon a dead man's brow;
And that was long ago,—
And I'm a grown man now.

It's lain there in the dust,
Thirty years and more;—
My lips that set a light
At a dead man's door.

THE CREATION

A Negro Sermon

By JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said,
"I'm lonely—
I'll make a world."

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God reached out and took the light in His
hands,
And God rolled the light around in His hands
Until He made the sun;
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
God gathered it up in a shining ball
And flung it against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.
Then down between
The darkness and the light
He hurled the world;
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God himself stepped down—
And the sun was on His right hand,

And the moon was on His left;
And the stars were clustered about His head,
And the earth was under His feet.
And God walked, and where He trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
And bulged the mountains up.

Then He stopped and looked and saw
And the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And He spat out the seven seas;
He batted His eyes, and the lightning flashed;
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled,
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,
And the little red flowers blossomed,
The pinetree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms,
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea;
And God smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared.
And curled itself around His shoulder.

Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said, *"Bring forth! Bring forth!"*
And quicker than God could drop His hand,
Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings.
And God said, *"That's good!"*

Then God walked around,
And God looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And He looked at His little stars;
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And God said, *"I'm lonely still."*

Then God sat down
On the side of a hill where he could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, *"I'll make me a man!"*

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled Him down;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand;
This great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;
Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.

GEORGIA DUSK

By JEAN TOOMER

THE sky, lazily disdaining to pursue
The setting sun, too indolent to hold
A lengthened tournament for flashing gold,
Passively darkens for night's barbecue.

A feast of moon and men and barking hounds,
An orgy for some genius of the South
With blood-hot eyes and cane-lipped scented mouth,
Surprised in making folk-songs from soul sounds.

The sawmill blows its whistle, buzz-saws stop,
And silence breaks the bud of knoll and hill,
Soft settling pollen where plowed lands fulfill
Their early promise of bumper crop.

Smoke from the pyramidal sawdust pile
Curls up, blue ghosts of trees, tarrying low
Where only chips and stumps are left to show
The solid proof of former domicile.

Meanwhile, the men, with vestiges of pomp,
Race memories of king and caravan,
High-priests, an ostrich, and a juju-man,
Go singing through the footpaths of the swamp.

Their voices rise . . . the pine trees are guitars,
Strumming, pine-needles fall like sheets of rain . . .
Their voices rise . . . the chorus of the cane
Or caroling a vesper to the stars. . . .

O singers, resinous and soft your songs
Above the sacred whisper of the pines,
Give virgin lips to cornfield concubines,
Bring dreams of Christ to dusky cane-lipped throngs.

SONG OF THE SON

By JEAN TOOMER

Pour, O pour that parting soul in song,
O pour it in the sawdust glow of night,
Into the velvet pine-smoke air to-night,
And let the valley carry it along.
And let the valley carry it along.

O land and soil, red soil and sweet-gum tree,
So scant of grass, so profligate of pines,
Now just before an epoch's sun declines,
Thy son, in time, I have returned to thee,
Thy son, I have, in time, returned to thee.

In time, for though the sun is setting on
A song-lit race of slaves, it has not set;
Though late, O soil, it is not too late yet
To catch thy plaintive soul, leaving, soon gone,
Leaving, to catch thy plaintive soul soon gone.

O Negro slaves, dark purple ripened plums,
Squeezed, and bursting in the pine-wood air,
Passing, before they stripped the old tree bare
One plum was saved for me, one seed becomes

An everlasting song, a singing tree,
Caroling softly souls of slavery,
What they were, and what they are to me,
Caroling softly souls of slavery.

IF WE MUST DIE

By CLAUDE McKAY

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,

While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but—fighting back!

THE HARLEM DANCER

By CLAUDE McKAY

Applauding youths laughed with young prostitutes,
And watched her perfect, half-clothed body sway;
Her voice was like the sound of blended flutes
Blown by black players upon a picnic day.
She sang and danced on gracefully and calm,
The light gauze hanging loosely about her form;
To me she seemed a proudly-swaying palm,
Grown lovelier for passing through a storm.
Upon her swarthy neck black, shiny curls
Profusely fell; and, tossing coins in praise,
The wine-flushed, bold-eyed boys, and even the girls
Devoured her with their eager, passionate gaze;
But, looking at her falsely-smiling face
I knew herself was not in that strange place.

SPRING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

By CLAUDE McKAY

Too green the springing April grass,
  Too blue the silver-speckled sky,
For me to linger here, alas,
  While happy winds go laughing by,
Wasting the golden hours indoors,
Washing windows and scrubbing floors.

Too wonderful the April night,
  Too faintly sweet the first May flowers,
The stars too gloriously bright,
  For me to spend the evening hours,
When fields are fresh and streams are leaping,
Wearied, exhausted, dully sleeping.

THE LYNCHING

By CLAUDE McKAY

His spirit in smoke ascended to high heaven.
His father, by the cruelest way of pain,
Had bidden him to his bosom once again;
The awful sin remained still unforgiven.
All night a bright and solitary star
(Perchance the one that ever guided him,
Yet gave him up at last to Fate's wild whim),
Hung pitifully o'er the swinging char.
Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view
The ghostly body swaying in the sun:
The women thronged to look, but never a one
Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;
And little lads, lynchers that were to be,
Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee.

LA VIE C'EST LA VIE

By JESSIE FAUSET

On summer afternoons I sit
Quiescent by you in the park,
And idly watch the sunbeams gild
And tint the ash-trees' bark.

Or else I watch the squirrels frisk
And chaffer in the grassy lane;
And all the while I mark your voice
Breaking with love and pain.

I know a woman who would give
Her chance of heaven to take my place;
To see the lovelight in your eyes,
The love-glow on your face!

And there's a man whose lightest word
Can set my chilly blood afire;
Fulfilment of his least behest
Defines my life's desire.

But he will none of me. Nor I
Of you. Nor you of her. 'Tis said
The world is full of jests like these.—
I wish that I were dead.

THE DARK BROTHER

By LEWIS ALEXANDER

"Lo, I am black, but I am comely too,
Black as the night, black as the deep dark caves.
I am the scion of a race of slaves
Who helped to build a nation strong that you
And I may stand within the world's full view,

Fearless and firm as dreadnoughts on rough
waves;
Holding a banner high whose floating braves
The opposition of the tried and untrue.

Casting an eye of love upon my face,
Seeing a newer light within my eyes,
A rarer beauty in your brother race
Will merge upon your visioning fullwise.
Though I am black my heart through love is
pure,
And you through love my blackness shall
endure!"

NIGGER

A Chant for Children

By FRANK HORNE

Little Black boy
Chased down the street—
"Nigger, nigger, never die,
Black face an' shiny eye,
"Nigger . . . nigger . . . nigger . . ."

Hannibal . . . Hannibal
Bangin' through the Alps,
Licked the proud Romans,
Ran home with their scalps—
"Nigger . . . nigger . . . nigger . . ."

Othello . . . black man,
Mighty in war,
Listened to Iago,
Called his wife a whore—
"Nigger . . . nigger . . . nigger . . ."

Crispus . . . Attucks,
Bullets in his chest,
Red blood of freedom
Runnin' down his vest—
"Nigger . . . nigger . . . nigger . . ."

Toussaint . . . Toussaint
Made the French flee
Fought like a demon,
Set his people free—
"Nigger . . . nigger . . . nigger . . ."

Jesus . . . Jesus,
Son of the Lord
—Spit in his face
—Nail him on a board—
"Nigger . . . nigger . . . nigger . . ."

Little black boy
Runs down the street—
"Nigger, nigger, never die.
Black face an' shiny eye,
Nigger . . . nigger . . . nigger . . ."

TO A DARK GIRL

By GWENDOLYN B. BENNETT

I LOVE you for your brownness,
And the rounded darkness of your breast,
I love you for the breaking sadness in your voice
And shadows where your wayward eyelids rest.

Something of old forgotten queens
Lurks in the lithe abandon of your walk
And something of the shackled slave
Sobs in the rhythm of your talk.

Oh, little brown girl, born for sorrow's mate,
Keep all you have of queenliness,
Forgetting that you once were slave,
And let your full lips laugh at Fate!

LONG GONE

By STERLING A. BROWN

I LAKS yo' kin' of lovin',
  Ain't never caught you wrong,
But it jes' ain' nachal
  Fo' to stay here long;

It jes' ain' nachal
  Fo' a railroad man,
With a itch fo' travelin'
  He cain't understan' . . .

I looks at de rails,
  An' I looks at de ties,
An' I hears an ole freight
  Puffin' up de rise,

An' at nights on my pallet
  When all is still,
I listens fo' de empties
  Bumpin' up de hill;

When I oughta be quiet,
  I is got a itch
Fo' to hear de whistle blow
  Fo' de crossin', or de switch.

An' I knows de time's a-nearin'
  When I got to ride
Though it's homelike and happy
  At yo' side.

You is done all you could do
To make me stay.
'Tain't no fault of yours I'se leavin'—
I'se jes' dataway.

I is got to see some people
I ain' never seen,
Gotta highball thu some country
Whah I never been. . . .

I don't know which way I'm travelin'—
Far or near,
All I knows fo' certain is,
I cain't stay here.

Ain't no call at all, sweet woman,
Fo' to carry on,—
Jes' my name and jes' my habit
To be Long Gone. . . .

I, TOO

By LANGSTON HUGHES

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
An' eat well,
And grow strong.

To-morrow,
I'll sit at the table
When company comes.

Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed,—

I, too, am America.

SONG FOR A DARK GIRL

By *LANGSTON HUGHES*

Way down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
They hung my black young lover
To a cross roads tree.

Way down South in Dixie
(Bruised body high in air)
I asked the white Lord Jesus
What was the use of prayer.

Way down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
Love is a naked shadow
On a gnarled and naked tree.

MULATTO

By *LANGSTON HUGHES*

I am your son, white man!
Georgia dusk
And the turpentine woods.
One of the pillars of the temple fell.

You are my son!
Like Hell!

The moon over the turpentine woods.
The Southern night
Full of stars,
Great big yellow stars.

Juicy bodies
Of nigger wenches
Blue black
Against black fences.
O, you little bastard boy,
What's a body but a toy?

The scent of pine wood strings the soft night air

What's the body of your mother?

Silver moonlight everywhere.

What's the body of your mother?

Sharp pine scent in the evening air.

A nigger night,
A nigger joy,
A little yellow
Bastard boy.

Now, you ain't my brother!
Niggers ain't my brother
Not ever.
Niggers ain't my brother!

The Southern night is full of stars.
Great big yellow stars.

O, sweet as earth,
Dusk dark bodies
Give sweet birth

To little bastard yellow boys.

Git on back there in the night,
You ain't white.

The bright stars scatter everywhere
Pinewood scent in the evening air.

A nigger night,
A nigger joy.

I am your son, white man!

A little yellow bastard boy.

WEARY BLUES

By *LANGSTON HUGHES*

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
He did a lazy sway. . . .
He did a lazy sway. . . .
To the tune o' those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad and raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!

Coming from a black man's soul.
O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—
"Ain't got nobody in all this world,
Ain't got nobody but maself
I's gwine to quit ma frownin'
And put ma troubles on the shelf."
Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more—
"I got the Weary Blues
And I can't be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues
And can't be satisfied—
I ain't happy no mo'
And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

SPIRITUALS

SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
O swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
Comin' for to carry me home,
A band of angels comin' after me,
Comin' for to carry me home.
If you get-a dere befo' I do,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Tell all my friends I'm comin' too,
Comin' for to carry me home.

O swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home,
Comin' for to carry me home.

GO DOWN MOSES

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt land,
Tell ole Pharaoh,
To let my people go.

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt land,
Tell ole Pharaoh,
To let my people go.

When Israel was in Egypt's land;
Let my people go,
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.

"Thus spoke the Lord," bold Moses said;
Let my people go,
If not I'll smite your first-born dead,
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt's land,
Tell ole Pharaoh,
To let my people go.
O, let my people go.

ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT WINGS

I GOT a robe, you got a robe,
All o' God's Chillun got a robe.
When I get to heab'n I'm goin' to put on my robe,
I'm goin' to shout all ovah God's Heab'n.
Heab'n, Heab'n,
Ev'rybody talkin' 'bout heab'n ain't goin' dere;
Heab'n, Heab'n,
I'm goin' to shout all ovah God's Heab'n.

I got-a wings, you got-a wings,
All o' God's Chillun got-a wings.
When I get to heab'n I'm goin' to put on my wings,
I'm goin' to fly all ovah God's Heab'n,

Heab'n, Heab'n,
Ev'rybody talkin' 'bout heab'n ain't goin' dere;
Heab'n, Heab'n,
I'm goin' to fly all ovah God's Heab'n.

I got a harp, you got a harp,
All o' God's Chillun got a harp,
When I get to heab'n I'm going to take up my harp,
I'm going to play all ovah God's Heab'n,
Heab'n, Heab'n,
Ev'rybody talkin' 'bout heab'n ain't goin' dere;
Heab'n, Heab'n,
I'm goin' to play all ovah' God's Heab'n.

I got shoes, you got shoes,
All o' God's Chillun got shoes,
When I get to heab'n I'm goin' to put on my shoes,
I'm goin' to walk all ovah God's Heab'n,
Heab'n, Heab'n,
Ev'rybody talkin' 'bout heab'n ain't goin' dere,
Heab'n, Heab'n,
I'm goin' to walk all ovah God's Heab'n,
I'm goin' to walk all ovah God's Heab'n,
I'm going' to walk all ovah, goin' to talk all ovah God's Heab'n.

DERE'S NO HIDIN' PLACE DOWN DERE

Dere's no hidin' place down dere,
Dere's no hidin' place down dere,
Oh I went to de rock to hide my face,
De rock cried out, "No hidin' place,"
Dere's no hidin' place down dere."

Oh de rock cried out, "I'm burnin' too,"
Oh de rock cried out, "I'm burnin' too,"
Oh de rock cried out "I'm burning too,

I want to go to hebb'n as well as you,
Dere's no hidin' place down dere."

Oh de sinner man he gambled an' fell,
Oh de sinner man he gambled an' fell,
Oh de sinner man gambled, he gambled an' fell;
He wanted to go to hebben, but he had to go to hell,
Dere's no hidin' place down dere.

DEEP RIVER

Deep river, my home is over Jordan,
Deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into campground,
Lord, I want to cross over into campground,
Lord, I want to cross over into campground,
Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

Oh, chillun,
Oh, don't you want to go, to that gospel feast,
That promised land, that land, where all is peace?
Walk into heaven, and take my seat,
And cast my crown at Jesus' feet.
Lord, I want to cross over into campground,
Lord, I want to cross over into campground,
Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

Deep river, my home is over Jordan,
Deep river
Lord, I want to cross over into campground,
Lord, I want to cross over into campground,
Lord, I want to pass over into campground,
Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

BLUES

ST. LOUIS BLUES *

By W. C. Handy

I HATE to see de ev'nin' sun go down
Hate to see de evenin' sun go down.
Cause my baby, he done lef dis town.

Feelin' tomorrow lak Ah feel today
Feel tomorrow lak Ah feel today
I'll pack my trunk, make ma get-away.

St. Louis woman
Wid her diamon' rings
Pulls dat man roun' by her apron strings

'Twant for powder
An' for store bought hair
De man I love would not gone nowhere.

Been to de Gypsy to get ma fortune tole
To de Gypsy done got ma fortune tole.
Cause I'm most wile 'bout ma Jelly Roll

Gypsy done tole me, "don't you wear no black"
Yes she done tole me, "don't you wear no black"
Go to St. Louis you can win him back.

Help me to Cairo make St. Louis by maself
Git to Cairo find ma ole friend Jeff,

Gwine to pin maself close to his side
If ah flag his train
I sho' can ride

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You ought to see dat stovepipe of mine,
Lak he owns de Dimon Joseph line.
He'd make a cross-eyed ol' man go stone blind

Blacker than midnight, teeth lak flags of truce
Blackest man in de whole St. Louis
Blacker de berry, sweeter is the juice.

About a crap game
He knows a pow'ful lot,
But when worktime comes he's on de dot.

Gwine to ask him for a cold ten-spot
What it takes to git it
He's certainly got.

FRIENDLESS BLUES *

By Mercedes Gilbert

Feel so low down an' sad Lawd,
Feel so low down an' sad Lawd
Lost everything I ever had

Ain't got no friend nowhere Lawd,
Ain't got no friend nowhere Lawd,
All by myself no one to care.

I met a man in my own home town,
In my own home town
I met a man in my own home town,
Coaxed me away now he has thrown me down.
I want to see that Indian River shore,
Indian River shore
I want to see that Indian River shore,
If I get back I'll never leave no more.

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When I was home the door was never closed,
door was never closed.
When I was home the door was never closed,
Where my home is now the good Lawd only knows.
'Member the time when I was young and gay,
when I was young and gay,
'Member the time when I was young and gay,
Had many friends hanging 'round me ev'ry day.

Money's all gone I'm so far from home,
I'm so far from home,
Money's all gone I'm so far from home, far from home
I just sit here all alone and cry an' moan, cry an' moan.

Harlem men won't treat no gal right,
won't treat no gal right.
Harlem men won't treat no gal right, no gal right.
They make you work all day and fight all night, fight all night.

MOUNTAIN TOP BLUES *

By Spencer Williams

Feel so sad and sorrowful runnin' over with the blues,
Feelin' sad and sorrowful runnin' over with the blues
If some one buys me poison that's the kind of death I'll choose.

Goin' up to the mountain top throw myself down in the sea,
Climb up to the mountain throw myself down in the sea
Jes' let the sharks and fishes make a big fuss over me.

Find a big high rock to jump from stones all thick down on the ground
Big high rock to jump from stones all thick down on the ground
And when you find me you'll see lots of pieces layin' round.

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Got myself a brand new hammock placed it underneath
a tree
Got a brand new hammock placed it underneath a tree
I hope the wind will blow so hard the tree will fall on me.

THE BLUES I'VE GOT *

By N. E. Reed and Ethel Neal

My name is Sal
A small town gal
I'm as lonesome as can be
'Cause my man brought me here
And forsaken me
I'm all alone
long ways from home
Everybody pass me by
All night long I lays awake
Wishin' I could die.

I've got the blues 'bout my mamma
Blues 'bout my papa,
Blues 'bout my sister Sue.
I've had the blues 'bout my brother
Now I've got the blues about you.
Why don't you come back home,
To me sweet man my love is true.

I've had the blues in the mornin',
When day was dawnin',
Blues when I go to bed.
I've got the blues 'cause I need you,
Now to hold my achin' head.
Why don't you come back home,
Before it's too late I'll be dead.

I've got the blues in the winter,
Blues in the summer,
Blues in the Spring and Fall.

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I've got the blues right now
Blue cause 'you won't answer my call.
Oh won't you come home,
Sweet man of mine so long and tall.

I've got the blues when I'm walkin'
Blues when I'm talkin',
Blues when I'm eatin' too.
I've got the blues when I'm thinkin'
'Bout another gal claimin' you.
You better hurry home,
I've got my eye on someone new.

When I'm all alone
I long to see my used-to-be
When I'm all alone
I want him round to comfort me.
I wish I was a rock down at the bottom of the sea.

LOVELESS LOVE *

By W. C. Handy

Love is like a gold brick in a bunco game
Like a banknote with a bogus name
Both have caused many downfalls
Love has done the same.

Love has for its emblem
Cupid with his bow
Loveless love has lots and lots of dough
So carry lots of Jack and pick 'em as you go.

Love is like a hydrant it turns off and on
Like some friendships when your money's gone
Love stands in with the loan sharks
When your heart's in pawn.

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If I had some strong wings
Like an aeroplane
Had some broad wings like an aeroplane
I would fly away forever ne'er to come again.

LABOR SONGS

WORK SONG

THOUGHT I fell in—ten foot o' water—
Thought I fell in—ten foot o' water—
Thought I fell in—ten foot o' water—
Over my head—over my head—

Jay bird sat on—a hick'ry limb—
Jay bird sat on—a hick'ry limb—
Jay bird sat on—a hick'ry limb—
Over my head—over my head.—

WATER BOY

WATER boy,
Where are you hidin'
If you don't come,
I'm gwine tell-a your Mammy.

Dere ain't no hammer
Dat's on dis mountain,
Dat rings-a like mine, boys,
Dat-a rings-a like-a mine

Dere ain't no hammer
Dat's on dis mountain,
Dat rings-a like mine, boys,
Dat-a rings-a like-a mine.

You Jack-o'-Diamonds,
You Jack-o'-Diamonds,
You rob-a my pockets
Of silver and gold.

You Jack-o'-Diamonds,
You Jack-o'-Diamonds,
You rob-a my pockets,
Of silver and gold.

Water boy,
Where are you hidin'?
If you don't come,
I'm gwine tell-a your Mammy.

CASEY JONES

Casey was goin' about ninety-four,
An' he forgot to blow.
Casey told the fireman he'd better jump,
For there's two locomotives that's about to bump.

Chorus:

Casey Jones, marchin' to the cabin,
Marchin' to the cabin with the orders in his hand.

Casey said, before he died,
"Three mo' roads I want to ride."
The fireman ask him what could they be,
"Southern Pacific an' the Santa Fe."

Casey told his children,
"Go to bed and hush your cryin',
You have another papa
On the Salt Lake Line."

JOHN HENRY

John Henry, he was a steel-drivin' man.
He died wid his hammer in his han'.
O come long boys, an' line up de track,
For John Henry, he ain't never comin' back.

John Henry said to his Cappun: "Boss,
A man hain't nothin' but a man,
An' 'fore I'll be beat in his sexion gang,
I'll die wid a hammer in my han'.

John Henry, he had a liddle boy,
He helt 'im in de pam of his han';
An' de las' word he say to dat chile wus:
"I wants you to be my steel-drivin' man."

John Henry, he had a pretty liddle wife,
An' her name, it was Polly Ann.
She walk down de track, widout lookin' back,
For to see her big fine steel-drivin' man.

John Henry had dat pretty liddle wife,
An' she went all dress up in red.
She walk ev' day down de railroad track
To de place whar her steel-drivin' man fell dead.

RAIN OR SHINE

I HOES an' I plows
In all kinds o' weather
I got to keep a-goin'
'Cause I can't do no better.

Rain or shine,
Sleet or snow,
When I gits done dis time,
Won't work no mo'.

Empty or full,
Sleep or 'wake,
I'm gwine to de party,
Dance fer dat cake.

ESSAYS

Literary

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN FICTION

By BENJAMIN BRAWLEY

Ever since Sydney Smith sneered at American books a hundred years ago, honest critics have asked themselves if the literature of the United States was not really open to the charge of provincialism. Within the last year or so the argument has been very much revived; and an English critic, Mr. Edward Garnett, writing in *The Atlantic Monthly,* has pointed out that with our predigested ideas and made-to-order fiction we not only discourage individual genius, but make it possible for the multitude to think only such thoughts as have passed through a sieve. Our most popular novelists and sometimes our most respectable writers, see only the sensation that is uppermost for the moment in the mind of the crowd—divorce, graft, tainted meat or money—and they proceed to cut the cloth of their fiction accordingly. Mr. Owen Wister, a "regular practitioner" of the novelist's art, in substance admitting the weight of these charges, lays the blame on our class democracy which utterly refuses to do its own thinking and which is satisfied only with the tinsel and gewgaws and hobbyhorses of literature. And no theme has suffered so much from the coarseness of the mob-spirit in literature as that of the Negro.

As a matter of fact, the Negro in his problems and strivings offers to American writers the greatest opportunity that could possibly be given to them today. It is commonly agreed that only one other large question, that of the relations of capital and labor, is of as much interest to the American public; and even this great issue fails to possess quite the appeal offered by the Negro from the social standpoint. One can only imagine what a Victor

Hugo, detached and philosophical, would have done with such a theme in a novel. When we see what actually has been done—how often in the guise of fiction a writer has preached a sermon or shouted a political creed, or vented his spleen—we are not exactly proud of the art of novel-writing as it has been developed in the United States of America. Here was opportunity for tragedy, for comedy, for the subtle portrayal of all the relations of man with his fellow man, for faith and hope and love and sorrow. And yet, with the Civil War fifty years in the distance, not one novel or one short story of the first rank has found its inspiration in this great theme. Instead of such work we have consistently had traditional tales, political tracts, and lurid melodramas.

Let us see who have approached the theme, and just what they have done with it, for the present leaving out of account all efforts put forth by Negro writers themselves.

The names of four exponents of Southern life come at once to mind—George W. Cable, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, and Thomas Dixon, and at once, in their outlook and method of work, the first two become separate from the last two. Cable and Harris have looked toward the past, and have embalmed vanished or vanishing types. Mr. Page and Mr. Dixon, with their thought on the present (though for the most part they portray the recent past), have used the novel as a vehicle for political propaganda.

It was in 1879 that *Old Creole Days* evidenced the advent of a new force in American literature; and on the basis of this work, and of *The Grandissimes* which followed, Mr. Cable at once took his place as the foremost portrayer of life in old New Orleans. By birth, by temperament, and by training he was thoroughly fitted for the task to which he set himself. His mother was from New England, his father of the stock of colonial Virginia; and the stern Puritanism of the North was mellowed by the

gentler influences of the South. Moreover, from his long apprenticeship in newspaper work in New Orleans he had received abundantly the knowledge and training necessary for his work. Setting himself to a study of the Negro of the old régime, he made a specialty of the famous—and infamous—quadroon society of Louisiana of the third and fourth decades of the last century. And excellent as was his work, turning his face to the past in manner as well as in matter, from the very first he raised the question propounded by this paper. In his earliest volume there was a story entitled *'Tite Poulette,* the heroine of which was a girl amazingly fair, the supposed daughter of one Madame John. A young Dutchman fell in love with Tite Poulette, championed her cause at all times, suffered a beating and stabbing for her, and was by her nursed back to life and love. In the midst of his perplexity about joining himself to a member of another race, came the word from Madame John that the girl was not her daughter, but the child of yellow fever patients whom she had nursed until they died, leaving their infant in her care. Immediately upon the publication of this story, the author received a letter from a young woman who had actually lived in very much the same situation as that portrayed in *'Tite Poulette,* telling him that his story was not true to life and that he knew it was not, for Madame John really *was* the mother of the heroine. Accepting the criticism, Mr. Cable set about the composition of *Madame Delphine,* in which the situation is somewhat similar, but in which at the end the mother tamely makes a confession to a priest. What is the trouble? The artist is so bound by circumstances and hemmed in by tradition that he simply has not the courage to launch out into the deep and work out his human problems for himself. Take a representative portrait from *The Grandissimes:*

Clemence had come through ages of African savagery through fires that do not refine, but that blunt and blast and

blacken and char; starvation, gluttony, drunkenness, thirst, drowning, nakedness, dirt, fetichism, debauchery, slaughter, pestilence, and the rest—she was their heiress; they left her the cinders of human feelings. . . . She had had children of assorted colors,—had one with her now, the black boy that brought the basil to Joseph; the others were here and there, some in the Grandissime households or field-gangs, some elsewhere within occasional sight, some dead, some not accounted for. Husbands—like the Samaritan woman's. We know she was a constant singer and laugher.

Very brilliant, of course; and yet Clemence is a relic; not a prophecy.

Still more of a relic is Uncle Remus. For decades now, this charming old Negro has been held up to the children of the South as the perfect expression of the beauty of life in the glorious times "befo' de wah," when every Southern gentleman was suckled at the bosom of a "black mammy." Why should we not occasionally attempt to paint the Negro of the new day—intelligent, ambitious, thrifty, manly? Perhaps he is not so poetic; but certainly the human element is greater.

To the school of Cable and Harris belong also, of course, Miss Grace King and Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart, a thoroughly representative piece of work being Mrs. Stuart's *Uncle 'Riah's Christmas Eve*. Other more popular writers of the day, Miss Mary Johnston and Miss Ellen Glasgow for instance, attempt no special analysis of the Negro. They simply take him for granted as an institution that always has existed and always will exist, as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, from the first flush of creation to the sounding of the trumpet of doom.

But more serious is the tone when we come to Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon. We might tarry for a few minutes with Mr. Page to listen to more such tales as those of Uncle Remus; but we must turn to living issues. Times have changed. The grandson of Uncle Remus does not feel that he must stand with his hat in his hand when

he is in our presence, and he even presumes to help us in the running of our government. This will never do; so in *Red Rock* and *The Leopard's Spots* it must be shown that he should never have been allowed to vote anyway, and those honorable gentlemen in the Congress of the United States in the year 1865 did not know at all what they were about. Though we are given the characters and setting of a novel, the real business is to show that the Negro has been the "sentimental pet" of the nation all too long. By all means let us have an innocent white girl, a burly Negro, and a burning at the stake, or the story would be incomplete.

We have the same thing in *The Clansman,* a "drama of fierce revenge." But here we are concerned very largely with the blackening of a man's character. Stoneham (Thaddeus Stevens very thinly disguised) is himself the whole Congress of the United States. He is a gambler, and "spends a part of almost every night at Hall & Pemberton's Faro Place on Pennsylvania Avenue." He is hysterical, "drunk with the joy of a triumphant vengeance." "The South is conquered soil," he says to the President (a mere figure-head, by the way), "I mean to blot it from the map." Further: "It is but the justice and wisdom of heaven that the Negro shall rule the land of his bondage. It is the only solution of the race problem. Wait until I put a ballot in the hand of every Negro, and a bayonet at the breast of every white man from the James to the Rio Grande." Stoneman, moreover, has a mistress, a mulatto woman, a "yellow vampire" who dominates him completely. "Senators, representatives, politicians of low and high degree, artists, correspondents, foreign ministers, and cabinet officers hurried to acknowledge their fealty to the uncrowned king, and hail the strange brown woman who held the keys of his house as the first lady of the land." This, let us remember, was for some months the best-selling book in the United States. A slightly altered version of it has very recently commanded such prices as

were never before paid for seats at a moving picture entertainment; and with *The Traitor* and *The Southerner,* it represents our most popular treatment of the gravest social question in American life! *The Clansman* is to American literature exactly what a Louisiana mob is to American democracy. Only too frequently, of course, the mob represents us all too well.

Turning from the longer works of fiction to the short story, I have been interested to see how the matter has been dealt with here. For purposes of comparison I have selected ten from a representative periodical index; we may assume that they are thoroughly typical. The ten are: *Shadow,* by Harry Stillwell Edwards, in the *Century* (December, 1906); *Callum's Co'tin': A Plantation Idyl,* by Frank H. Sweet, in the *Craftsman* (March, 1907); *His Excellency the Governor,* by L. M. Cooke, in *Putnam's* (February, 1908); *The Black Drop,* by Margaret Deland, in *Collier's Weekly* (May 2 and 9, 1908); *Jungle Blood,* by Elmore Elliott Peake, in *McClure's* (September, 1908); *The Race-Rioter,* by Harris Merton Lyon, in the *American* (February, 1910); *Shadow,* by Grace MacGowan Cooke and Alice MacGowan, in *Everybody's* (March, 1910); *Abram's Freedom,* by Edna Turpin, in the *Atlantic* (September, 1912); *A Hypothetical Case,* by Norman Duncan, in *Harper's* (June, 1915); and *The Chalk Game,* by L. B. Yates, in the *Saturday Evening Post* (June 5, 1915). For high standards of fiction I think we may safely say that, all in all, the periodicals here mentioned are representative of the best that America has to offer. In some cases the story cited is the only one on the Negro question that a magazine has published within the decade.

Shadow, in the *Century,* is the story of a Negro convict who for a robbery committed at the age of fourteen was sentenced to twenty years of hard labor in the mines of Alabama. An accident disabled him, however, and prevented his doing the regular work for the full period of his imprisonment. At twenty he was a hostler, looking

forward in despair to the fourteen years of confinement still waiting for him. But the three little girls of the prison commissioner visit the prison. Shadow performs many little acts of kindness for them, and their hearts go out to him. They storm the governor and the judge for his pardon, and present the Negro with his freedom as a Christmas gift. The story is not long, but it strikes a note of genuine pathos.

Callum's Co'tin' is concerned with a hardworking Negro, a blacksmith, nearly forty, who goes courting the girl who called at his shop to get a trinket mended for her mistress. At first he makes himself ridiculous by his finery; later he makes the mistake of coming to a crowd of merry-makers in his working clothes. More and more, however, he storms the heart of the girl, who eventually capitulates. From the standpoint simply of craftsmanship, the story is an excellent piece of work.

His Excellency the Governor deals with the custom on Southern plantations of having, in imitation of the white people, a Negro "governor" whose duty it was to settle minor disputes. At the death of old Uncle Caleb, who for years had held this position of responsibility, his son Jubal should have been the next in order. He was likely to be superseded, however, by loud-mouthed Sambo, though urged to assert himself by Maria, his wife, an old house-servant who had no desire whatever to be defeated for the place of honor among the women by Sue, a former field hand. At the meeting where all was to be decided, however, Jubal with the aid of his fiddle completely confounded his rival and won. There are some excellent touches in the story; but, on the whole, the composition is hardly more than fair in literary quality.

The Black Drop, throughout which we see the hand of an experienced writer, analyzes the heart of a white boy who is in love with a girl who is almost white, and who when the test confronts him suffers the tradition that binds him to get the better of his heart. "But you will still be-

lieve that I love you?" he asks, ill at ease as they separate. "No, of course, I can not believe that," replies the girl.

Jungle Blood is the story of a simple-minded, simple-hearted Negro of gigantic size, who in a moment of fury kills his pretty wife and the white man who has seduced her. The tone of the whole may be gleaned from the description of Moss Harper's father: "An old darky sat drowsing on the stoop. There was something ape-like about his long arms, his flat, wide-nostriled nose, and the mat of gray wool which crept down his forehead to within two inches of his eyebrows."

The Race-Rioter sets forth the stand of a brave young sheriff to protect his prisoner, a Negro boy, accused of the assault and murder of a little white girl. Hank Egge tries by every possible subterfuge to defeat the plans of a lynching party, and finally dies riddled with bullets as he is defending his prisoner. The story is especially remarkable for strong and sympathetic characterization of such contrasting figures as young Egge and old Dikeson, the father of the dead girl.

Shadow, in *Everybody's,* is a story that depends for its force very largely upon incident. It studies the friendship of a white boy, Ranny, opposed by both the Northern white mother and the ambitious and independent Negro mother. In a fight, Shad breaks a collar-bone for Ranny; later he saves him from drowning. In the face of Ranny's white friends, all the harsher side of the problem is seen, and yet the human element is strong beneath it all. The story, not without considerable merit as it is, would have been infinitely stronger if the friendship of the two boys had been pitched on a higher plane. As it is, Shad is very much like a dog following his master.

Abram's Freedom is at the same time one of the most clever and one of the most provoking stories with which we have to deal. It is a perfect example of how one may walk directly up to the light and then deliberately turn his back upon it. The story is set just before the Civil War.

It deals with the love of the slave Abram for a free young woman, Emmeline. "All his life he had heard and used the phrase 'free nigger' as a term of contempt. What, then, was this vague feeling, not definite enough yet to be a wish or even a longing?" So far, so good. Emmeline inspires within her lover the highest ideals of manhood, and he becomes a hostler in a livery-stable, paying to his master so much a year for his freedom. Then comes the astounding and forced conclusion. At the very moment when, after years of effort, Emmeline has helped her husband to gain his freedom (and when all the slaves are free as a matter of fact by virtue of the Emancipation Proclamation), Emmeline, whose husband has special reason to be grateful to his former master, says to the lady of the house: "Me an' Abram ain't got nothin' to do in dis worl' but to wait on you an' master."

In *A Hypothetical Case* we again see the hand of a master-craftsman. Is a white boy justified in shooting a Negro who has offended him? The white father is not quite at ease, quibbles a good deal, but finally says, "Yes." The story, however, makes it clear that the Negro did not strike the boy. He was a hermit living on the Florida coast and perfectly abased when he met Mercer and his two companions. When the three boys pursued him and finally overtook him, the Negro simply held the hands of Mercer until the boy had recovered his temper. Mercer in his rage really struck himself.

The Chalk Game is the story of a little Negro jockey who wins a race in Louisville only to be drugged and robbed by some "flashlight" Negroes who send him to Chicago. There he recovers his fortunes by giving to a group of gamblers the correct "tip" on another race, and he makes his way back to Louisville much richer by his visit. Throughout the story emphasis is placed upon the superstitious element in the Negro race, an element readily considered by men who believe in luck.

Of these ten stories, only five strike out with even the

slightest degree of independence. *Shadow,* in the *Century,* is not a powerful piece of work, but it is written in tender and beautiful spirit. *The Black Drop* is a bold handling of a strong situation. *The Race-Rioter* also rings true, and in spite of the tragedy there is optimism in this story of a man who is not afraid to do his duty. *Shadow,* in *Everybody's,* awakens all sorts of discussion, but at least attempts to deal honestly with a situation that might arise in any neighborhood at any time. *A Hypothetical Case* is the most tense and independent story in the list.

On the other hand, *Callum's Co'tin'* and *His Excellency the Governor,* bright comedy though they are, belong, after all, to the school of Uncle Remus. *Jungle Blood* and *The Chalk Game* belong to the class that always regards the Negro as an animal, a minor, a plaything—but never as a man. *Abram's Freedom,* exceedingly well written for two-thirds of the way, falls down hopelessly at the end. Many old Negroes after the Civil War preferred to remain with their former masters; but certainly no young woman of the type of Emmeline, would sell her birthright for a mess of pottage.

Just there is the point. That the Negro is ever to be taken seriously is incomprehensible to some people. The more Gwynplaine protests, the more outlandish he becomes to the House of Lords.

We are simply asking that those writers of fiction who deal with the Negro shall be thoroughly honest with themselves, and not remain forever content to embalm old types and work over outworn ideas. Rather should they sift the present and forecast the future. But of course the editors must be considered. The editors must give their readers what the readers want; and when we consider the populace, of course we have to reckon with the mob. And the mob does not find anything very attractive about a Negro who is intelligent, cultured, manly and who does not smile. It will be observed that in no one of the ten stories above mentioned, not even in one of the five remarked

most favorably, is there a Negro of this type. Yet he is obliged to come. America has yet to reckon with him. The day of Uncle Remus as well as of Uncle Tom is over.

Even now, however, there are signs of better things. Such an artist as Mr. Howells, for instance, has once or twice dealt with the problem in excellent spirit. Then there is the work of the Negro writers themselves. The numerous attempts in fiction made by them have most frequently been open to the charge of crassness already considered; but Paul Laurence Dunbar, Charles W. Chesnutt, and W. E. Burghardt Du Bois have risen above the crowd. Mr. Dunbar, of course, was better in poetry than in prose. Such a short story as *Jimsella,* however, exhibited considerable technique. *The Uncalled* used a living topic treated with only partial success. But for the most part, Mr. Dunbar's work looked toward the past. Somewhat stronger in prose is Mr. Chesnutt. *The Marrow of Tradition* is not much more than a political tract, and *The Colonel's Dream* contains a good deal of preaching; but *The House Behind the Cedars* is a real novel. Among his short stories, *The Bouquet* may be remarked for technical excellence, and *The Wife of His Youth* for a situation of unusual power. Dr. Du Bois's *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* contains at least one strong dramatic situation, that in which Bles probes the heart of Zora; but the author is a sociologist and essayist rather than a novelist.

Some day we shall work out the problems of our great country. Some day we shall not have a state government set at defiance, and the massacre of Ludlow. Some day our little children will not slave in mines and mills, but will have some chance at the glory of God's creation; and some day the Negro will cease to be a problem and become a human being. Then, in truth, we shall have the Promised Land. But until that day comes let those who mold our ideals and set the standards of our art in fiction at least be honest with themselves and independent. Ignorance we may for a time forgive; but a man has only himself to blame if he insists on not seeing the sunrise in the new day.

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN CULTURE

By ALAIN LOCKE

The position of the Negro in American culture is indeed a paradox. It almost passes understanding how and why a group of people can be socially despised, yet at the same time artistically esteemed and culturally influential, can be both an oppressed minority and a dominant cultural force. Yet this is their position, at least at present. Some of the most characteristic American things are Negro or Negroid, derivatives of the folk life of this darker tenth of the population, and America at home basks in their influence, thrives upon their consumption and vulgarization, and abroad at least must accept their national representativeness. This because these things are among the most distinctive products of the American soil, and because too they have a contagious and almost irresistible hold upon human psychology—since, being soundly primitive, they are basically and universally human. Even now, much of what is characteristically Negro is representatively American; and as the contemporary cultural and artistic expression of the Negro spirit develops, this will be so more and more.

Unfortunately, but temporarily, what is best known are the vulgarizations; and of these "Jazz" and by-products are in the ascendancy. We must not, cannot, disclaim the origin and characteristic quality of "Jazz"; it is an important racial derivative. But it does not follow that it is spiritually representative. It is in the first place not a pure Negro folk thing, but a hybrid product of the reaction of the elements of Negro folk song and dance upon popular and general elements of contemporary American life. "Jazz" is one-third Negro folk idiom, one-third ordinary

middle class American idea and sentiment, and one-third spirit of the "machine-age" which, more and more, becomes not American but Occidental. Because the basic color of the mixture is Negro, we attribute jazz, more largely than we should, to Negro life. Rather we should think of it this way,—jazz represents Negro life in its technical elements, American life in general in its intellectual content. This may seem an unwarrantable statement, and will remain so for those who only know American life superficially. The truth becomes evident, however, only to those who contrast the pure and serious forms of Negro art, which are less known, with the popular vulgarized forms which, with the modern vogue of jazz, are world-known. The serious folk art of the older Negro generation is best represented by the so-called "Spirituals," a body of real and genuine folk-song of great musical and spiritual importance; while the serious art which can best represent to the world the Negro of the present generation is contemporary Negro poetry. In this article, we shall use Negro poetry as a means of indicating the present cultural position of the Negro in American life.

Properly to do so, we should first see a little of the historical background. Slavery, for generations the lot of nine-tenths of the Negro population, put upon the Negro the conditions and stigma of a peasant class: conditions which as economic and civic handicaps and as race prejudice still hamper, in spite of considerable improvement, the position of the Negro masses, emancipated only since 1863. In spite of rapid assimilation of American standards and ways of life, and phenomenal educational advance (only 11 per cent of the Negro population is now illiterate), and in spite of much philanthropic interest and help from a minority of the white population, the general attitude of public opinion in America has set the Negro off to himself as a class apart. It has been an inconsistent ostracism from the beginning, even under the slave régime. For then, while the Negro was most despised, he was as domestic menial ensconced in the very heart of the family life of the land-

owning aristocracy; a situation which accounts in part for his rapid assimilation of American modes. Since emancipation, American race prejudice has been just as capricious; it has segregated the Negro socially but not culturally in the broad sense of the word culture, and while making him a submerged class economically and politically, has not isolated or differentiated his institutional life.

The consequence has been that the Negro today is a typical American with only a psychological sense of social difference; a minority that, having no political vent for its collective ambitions—since political participation and equal civic rights are the goal of its practical aspirations—has an enormous amount of accumulated energy to focus upon artistic expression and cultural self-determination. Social prejudice, which was meant to hamper the Negro,—and which has hampered him in economic, political and social ways,—has turned out to be a great spiritual discipline and a cultural blessing in disguise. For it has preserved the Negro sense of a peculiar folk-solidarity, preserved the peculiar folk-values and intensified their modes of expression; so that now they stand out in the rather colorless amalgam of the general population as the most colorful and distinctive spiritual things in American life. This is the root of the paradox we referred to at the beginning; the stone that was socially rejectd in the practical aspects of the American democracy has become a corner stone spiritually in the making of a distinctive American culture. For when America began to tire of being culturally merely a province of Europe, and turned to the artistic development of native things, among the most distinctive to hand were the folk-things of the Negro which prejudice had isolated from the materializing and standardizing processes of general American conditions.

This was the position that confronted the cultural nationalists in America a decade ago:—the aboriginal Indian things had been ruthlessly pushed aside and all but exterminated, the native white elements were for the most

part different only in size, number and tempo from their European derivatives; and there, characteristically different and colorful, were the Negro folk-products,—an alluring, undeveloped source of native materials and local color. We had a wholesale adoption of these elements in popular dance and music; then as European appreciation pointed the way—(we must not forget the rôle of Dvorák, Delius and Darius Milhaud in this), a second wave of this influence spread to serious music. In another field, after a popular craze for "dialect poetry" led in the nineties by a Negro poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, serious American poetry began with Vachel Lindsay to turn to jazz rhythms and background for inspiration. The climax of this movement, naturally, has been with the contemporary Negro poets whom we shall soon discuss. Then in the development of native American drama, Ridgely Torrence started a vogue for Negro folk-plays, and Edward Sheldon and Eugene O'Neill discovered the unique possibilities of the Negro problem-play, as "The Emperor Jones." Paul Green, late Pulitzer prize winner, discovered the importance of the Southern Negro folk-types in the series of plays which have made him a figure in the development of native American drama. Lately, too, a whole school of American fiction has been turning to the exploitation of the Negro milieu and its folk-values; one school with an exotic approach,—Ronald Firbank, Haldane McFall, Carl Van Vechten, and another still more important school of Southern realism, Ellen Glasgow, Julia Peterkin ("Green Thursday" and "Black April") climaxing with Du Bose Heyward's famous story of Charleston life, "Porgy." These have been supplemented later by a school of Negro writers of fiction, among which the recent successes of Claude McKay's "Home to Harlem," and Rudolph Fisher's "The Walls of Jericho," have given us, by all odds, the most representative Negro fiction up to date. We can thus trace the reasons why, in recent American art, the Negro has had proportionately more than his tenth share of space and influence, and how, as an unex-

pected but very appreciable gift to the national spiritual life, —a veritable treasure of the humble—the Negro elements have given new values and fresh momentum to the contemporary cultural self-expression of America.

But the greatest and most representative development of Negro folk-experience and its values must come from Negro artists themselves. This situation, after generations of artistic impotence except in folk-lore and folk-song, is now being capitalized by the young Negro intellectuals. And contemporary Negro poetry is its best articulate expression. In it we can see more clearly than anywhere else the ideals and objectives of the "New Negro," and the movement for cultural self-expression that has been aptly termed the "Negro Renaissance." A Negro editor of the new school, Charles S. Johnson, says: "The new racial poetry of the Negro is the expression of something more than experimentation in a new technique. It marks the birth of a new racial consciousness and self-conception. It is first of all a frank acceptance of race, but the recognition of this difference without the usual implications of disparity. It lacks apology, the wearying appeals to pity, and the conscious philosophy of defense. In being itself it reveals its greatest charm; and in accepting its distinctive life, invests it with a new meaning." Mr. Johnson is further right in saying that "the poetry of Langston Hughes is without doubt the finest expression of this new Negro poetry. It is also a significant part of the poetry of new America, recording its beauty in its own idiom." Langston Hughes has written this manifesto of the movement: "We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it does not matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain,

free within ourselves." This is the young Negro's spiritual declaration of independence; and marks the attainment, nearly two generations after physical freedom, of spiritual emancipation.

But what, we may now ask, is Negro Poetry? Certainly not merely poetry by Negro writers. There is a considerable amount of abstract lyricism on universal themes, written by Negro poets. This vein of expression serves as a demonstration of the Negro's participation in the national culture common to all, of his share in modern thought in fact. Neither is Negro poetry the older dialect poetry of a peasant patois and a Ghetto world of restricted and genre types and sentiment. Negro poetry today represents many strains, having only one common factor,—the fact of reflecting some expression of the emotional sense of race or some angle of the peculiar group tradition and experience. In the case of the American Negro the sense of race is stronger than that of nationality; and in some form or other is a primary factor in the consciousness of the Negro poet.

Race has many diverse ways of reflecting itself in the equation of life; each temperament reflects it just a bit differently and reacts to it just a bit differently. We too frequently neglect this important point, that the racial factors may reside in the overtones of artistic expression and that there is often more of race in its sublimations than in its crude reportorial expression. Of course, to begin with, we have the direct portrayal of Negro folk-life and folk-types, with their characteristic idioms of thought, feeling and speech, but contemporary Negro poetry has opened up many other veins of subtler racial expression. There is, for example, the poetry of derived emotional coloring that merely reflects in a secondary way the tempo and moods of Negro life, the school that reflects not a race substance but a race temperament. There is too the vein that emphasizes the growing historical sense of a separate cultural tradition; a racialist trend that is the equivalent of a nationalist

background and spirit in Europe. Again, we have the poetry of personal expression in which the racial situations induce a personal reaction and a particular philosophy of life. Finally we have the vein that directly expresses the sense of group and its common experiences, and partly as poetry of social protest, partly as poetry of social exhortation and propaganda, directly capitalizes the situations and dilemmas of racial experience. For the analysis of Negro poetry these strains of race consciousness and their modes of expression are more important, if anything, than the formal and technical distinctions of a poetic school. It is upon this basis, at least, that we shall proceed in this present analysis.

A basic point for the interpretation of contemporary Negro poetry is the realization that the traditional dialect school is now pretty generally regarded as the least representative in any intimate racial sense. To the Negro poet of today, it represents a "minstrel tradition," imposed from without and reflecting, even in its apparent unsophistication, conscious posing and self-conscious sentimentality. If Negro poetry of this type had addressed primarily its own audience, it would have been good poetry in the sense that the "Spirituals" are. But for the most part it has been a "play-up" to set stereotypes and an extraverted appeal to the amusement complex of the overlords. Rarely, as in the case of a true folk-ballad or work-song, lullaby or love-song, do we have in Negro dialect poetry the genuine brew of naïve folk-products. Rather have these things presented the Negro spirit in distorted, histrionic modifications, tainted with the attitude of "professional entertainment." Of course, one may argue, the poetry of the Troubadours was that of professional entertainers,—and so it was, but with this difference—that the tradition was completely shared by the audiences and that there was no dissociation of attitude between those who sang and those who listened.

So in the revision of the dialect tradition which the younger Negro poets are trying to bring about, there is first

of all James Weldon Johnson's well-known criticism of dialect as a limited medium of expression, "with but two stops,—pathos and humor." There is also the attempt to reinstate the authentic background, and the naïve point of view, as is successfully achieved at times in Mr. Johnson's "sermons in verse" of the "God's Trombones" volume. Here we have the folk-spirit attempting at least the "epic rôle," and speaking in the grand manner, as in the Judgment Day sermon of the old ante-bellum Negro preacher:

> Too late, sinner! Too late!
> Good-bye, sinner! Good-bye!
> In hell, sinner! In hell!
> Beyond the reach of the love of God.
>
> And I hear a voice, crying, crying;
> Time shall be no more!
> Time shall be no more!
> Time shall be no more!
> And the sun will go out like a candle in the wind,
> The moon will turn to dripping blood,
> The stars will fall like cinders,
> And the sea will burn like tar;
> And the earth shall melt away and be dissolved,
> And the sky will roll up like a scroll.
> With a wave of his hand God will blot out time,
> And start the wheel of eternity.
>
> Sinner, oh, sinner,
> Where will you stand
> In that great day when God's a-going to rain down fire?

The contemporary dialect school insists on true and objective folk-values: though not always on the serious, bardic note which is sounded here. But even in comic portrayal the younger school tries equally to purge the false sentimentality and clownishness, and has been successful. The folk-lyrics of Langston Hughes have spontaneous moods and rhythms, and carry irresistible conviction. They are our really most successful efforts up to this date to re-

capture the folk-soul; he ranges from the deep spirituality of:

At de feet o' Jesus,
Sorrow like a sea.
Lordy, let yo' mercy
Come driftin' down on me.

At de feet o' Jesus,
At yo' feet I stand
O, ma little Jesus,
Please reach out yo' hand —

to the quizzical humor of

I'm gonna walk to de graveyard
'Hind ma friend, Miss Cora Lee.
Gonna walk to de graveyard
'Hind ma dear friend, Cora Lee,
Cause when I'm dead some
Body'll have to walk behind me.

And again to the homely, secular folkliness of

De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
Ever' time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

This work of Hughes in the folk-forms has started up an entire school of younger Negro poetry: principally in the *blues* form and in the folk-ballad vein. It is the latter that seems to me most promising, in spite of the undeniable interest of the former in bringing into poetry some of the song and dance rhythms of the Negro. But this is, after all, a technical element: it is the rich substance of Negro life that promises to rise in recreated outlines from the folk-ballads of the younger writers. And much as the popular interest in the preservation of this peasant material owes to

Paul Laurence Dunbar, to "When Malindy Sings" and "When de Co'n Pone's Hot," nevertheless there is no comparison in authenticity or naïve beauty in the more objective lyrics of today. For example, Lucy Williams' "No'thboun' ":

O' de wurl' ain't flat,
An' de wurl' ain't round
H'its one long strip
Hangin' up an' down—
Jes' Souf an' Norf;
Jes' Norf an' Souf.
Since Norf is up,
An' Souf is down,
An' Hebben is up,
I'm upward boun'.

Or Joseph Cotter's "Tragedy of Pete" or Sterling Brown's "Odyssey of Big Boy" or "Maumee Ruth." As a matter of fact, this latter poet is, with Hughes, a genius of folk-values, the most authentic evocation of the homely folk-soul. His importance warrants quotation at length. "Tornado Blue," contemporary though it is, is graphically authentic:

Black wind came aspeedin' down de river from de Kansas plains,
Black wind came aspeedin' down de river from de Kansas plains,
Black wind came aroarin' like a flock of giant aeroplanes.

Destruction was adrivin' it, and close beside was Fear.
Destruction drivin', pa'dner at his side was Fear,
Grinnin' Death and skinny Sorrow was abringin' up de rear. . . .

Newcomers dodged de mansions, an' knocked on de po' folks' do'.
Dodged most of de mansions, an' knocked down de po' folks' do'.
Never knew us po' folks so popular befo'.

Foun' de moggidge unpaid, foun' de insurance long past due,
Moggidge unpaid, de insurance very long pas' due,
De home we wukked so hard fo' goes back to de Fay an' Jew.

"Memphis Blues" is inimitably fine:

Nineveh. Tyre.
Babylon,
Not much lef'
Of either one.
All dese cities
Ashes and rust
De wind sings sperrichals
Through deir dus'.
Was another Memphis
'Mongst de olden days,
Done been destroyed
In many ways. . . .
Dis here Memphis
It may go.
Floods may drown it,
Tornado blow,
Mississippi wash it
Down to sea—
Like de other Memphis in
History.

The modern dialect school—if it may so be styled—has thus developed a simplicity and power unknown to the earlier dialect writers, and has revealed a psychology so much more profound and canny than the peasant types with which we were so familiar and by which we were so amused and cajoled that we are beginning to doubt today the authenticity of what for years has passed as the typical Negro.

Another remove from the plain literal transcription of folk-life is the work of the "Jazz school," which as a matter of fact is not native in origin. Vachel Lindsay it was who brought it into prominence at a time when it was only a submerged and half-inarticulate motive in Negro

doggerel. Today it too often degenerates back into this mere trickery of syncopation. Yet there is powerful and fresh poetic technique in its careful transposition to poetic idiom. But it will never come into its own with an eye-reading public or until its close competitor, the school of free verse, begins to lose some of its vogue. For essentially it is not a school of irregular rhythm like the free verse technique, but a more varied and quantitative scansion based on musical stresses and intervals inseparable from the ear control of chant and oral delivery. Only elaborate analysis will do it justice, but an obvious and masterful example will have to suffice us in a quotation from Jean Toomer:

> Pour, O pour that parting soul in song,
> O pour it in the sawdust glow of night,
> Into the velvet pine-smoke air to-night,
> And let the valley carry it along.
> And let the valley carry it along. . . .
>
> O land and soil, red soil and sweet gum-tree,
> So scant of grass, so profligate of pines,
> Now just before an epoch's sun declines,
> Thy son, in time, I have returned to thee,
> Thy son, I have in time returned to thee.

There is more Negro rhythm here, and in a line like "Caroling softly souls of slavery," than in all the more exaggerated jazz of the sensationalists, black and white, who beat the bass-drum and trapping cymbals of American jazz rather than the throbbing tom-tom and swaying lilt of the primitive voice and body surcharged with escaping emotion. Negro rhythms, even in their gay moods, are rhapsodic; they quiver more than they clash, they glide more than they march. So except in occasional patches, the rhythmic expression of Negro idioms in poetry awaits a less sensation-loving audience than we now have, and subtler musicianship than even our contemporary poets have yet attained.

We come now to the more sophisticated expressions of race in American Negro poetry. For a long while the racial sense of the Negro poet was hectic and forced: it was self-consciously racial rather than normally so. These were the days of rhetoric and apostrophe. The emotional identification was at best dramatic, and often melodramatic. As with the greater group-pride and assurance of the present-day Negro, race becomes more of an accepted fact, his racial feelings are less constrained. Countee Cullen's calmly stoical sonnet "From the Dark Tower," Arna Bontemp's "A Black Man Talks of Reaping," Langston Hughes' "Dream Variation" or "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" are characteristic now. Yesterday it was the rhetorical flush of partisanship, challenged and on the defensive. This was the patriotic stage through which we had to pass. Nothing is more of a spiritual gain in the life of the Negro than the quieter assumption of his group identity and heritage; and contemporary Negro poetry registers this incalculable artistic and social gain. Occasionally dramatic still, and to advantage, as in Cullen's "Simon the Cyrenian Speaks" or Lewis Alexander's sonnets "Africa" and "The Dark Brother," the current acceptance of race is quiet with deeper spiritual identification and supported by an undercurrent of faith rather than a surface of challenging pride.

Thus, as in Gwendolyn Bennett's:

> I love you for your brownness
> And the rounded darkness of your breast.
> I love you for the breaking sadness in your voice
> And shadows where your wayward eyelids rest. . . .
>
> Oh, little brown girl, born for sorrow's mate,
> Keep all you have of queenliness,
> Forgetting that you once were slave,
> And let your full lips laugh at Fate!

Or again, Countee Cullen's:

My love is dark as yours is fair,
Yet lovelier I hold her
Than listless maids with pallid hair,
And blood that's thin and colder.

You-proud-and-to-be-pitied one,
Gaze on her and despair;
Then seal your lips until the sun
Discovers one as fair.

A subtler strain of race consciousness flows in a more mystical sense of race that is coming to be a favorite mood of Negro poetry. This school was born in the lines of Claude McKay to "The Harlem Dancer":

But looking at her falsely smiling face,
I knew herself was not in that strange place.

This mood springs from the realization that the Negro experience has bred something mystical and strangely different in the Negro soul. It is a sublimation of the fact of race, conjured up nowhere more vividly than in these lines of Langston Hughes:

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

However, this mystical transposition of race into pure feeling is often so sublimated as not to be explicit at all: many a reader would not detect it in the following two poems, except as it was pointed out to him as a veiled statement of racial emotion or racial experience. Lewis Alexander's "Transformation" refers to racial largesse and Negro social forgiveness:

I return the bitterness,
Which you gave to me;
When I wanted loveliness
Tantalant and free.

I return the bitterness.
It is washed by tears;
Now it is a loveliness
Garnished through the years.

I return it loveliness,
Having made it so;
For I wore the bitterness
From it long ago.

This is all the more effective because it might just as well be a romantic lyric of unrequited love or a poem of Christian forgiveness; though very obviously it is the old miracle of the deepest particularity finding the universal. The same is true, I think, of another fine lyric, "I Think I See Him There," by Waring Cuney that almost needs the conscious recall of the Negro spiritual

Were you there
When they nailed Him to the cross

to sense the background of its particular Negro intensity of feeling and compassion:

I think I see Him there
With a stern dream on His face
I see Him there—
Wishing they would hurry
The last nail in place.
And I wonder, had I been there,
Would I have doubted too?
Or would the dream have told me,
What this man speaks is true.

One would, of course, not foolishly claim for the race a monopoly of this sort of spiritual discipline and intensification of mood, but at the same time there is no more potent and potential source of it in all modern experience.

We next come to that strain of Negro poetry that reflects social criticism. With the elder generation, this strain

was prominent, more so even than today, but it began and ended in humanitarian and moral appeal. It pled for human rights and recognition, was full of pathos and self-pity, and threatened the wrath of God, but in no very commanding way. Finally in bitter disillusionment it turned to social protest and revolt. The challenge vibrated within our own generation to the iron notes and acid lines of Claude McKay. Weldon Johnson's title poem, "Fifty Years and After," represents a transition point between the anti-slavery appeal and the radical threat. To the extent that the radical challenge is capable of pure poetry, Claude McKay realized it. But contemporary Negro poetry has found an even more effective weapon and defense than McKay's

> If we must die—let it not be like hogs
> Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot.

Or the mood of his terrific indictment, "The Lynching":

> All night a bright and solitary star
> Hung pitifully o'er the swinging char.
> Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view
> The ghastly body swaying in the sun:
> The women thronged to look, but never a one
> Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue;
> And little lads, lynchers that were to be,
> Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee.

For Negro protest has found a true catharsis in a few inspired notes, and has discovered the strength of poetic rather than intellectual irony. As a point of view this promises perhaps a more persuasive influence than any literary and artistic force yet brought to bear upon the race question in all the long debate of generations. Certainly we have that note in Langston Hughes' "Song for a Dark Girl":

Way down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
They hung my black young lover
To a cross-roads tree.

Way down South in Dixie
(Bruised body high in air)
I asked the white Lord Jesus
What was the use of prayer?

Way down South in Dixie
(Break the heart of me)
Love is a naked shadow
On a gnarled and naked tree.

Finally we come to the most sophisticated of all race motives—the conscious and deliberate threading back of the historic sense of group tradition to the cultural backgrounds of Africa. Undoubtedly this motive arose in a purely defensive and imitative reaction. But it has grown stronger and more positive year by year. Africa is naturally romantic. It is poetic capital of the first order, even apart from the current mode of idealizing the primitive and turning toward it in the reaction from the boredom of ultra-sophistication. There is some of this Caucasian strain in the Negro poet's attitude toward Africa at the present time. But it is fortunately not dominant with the Negro poet. It is interesting to notice the different approaches from which the younger Negro poets arrive at a spiritual espousal of Africa. Of course, with the minor poetical talents, it is rhetorical and melodramatically romantic, as it has always been. But our better poets are above this. Mr. Cullen, who has a dormant but volcanically potential "paganism of blood"—(he himself puts it, "My chief problem has been that of reconciling a Christian upbringing with a pagan inclination")—is torn between the dilemma of the primitive and the sophisticated in more poems than the famous "Heritage" which dramatizes the conflict so brilliantly. For him the African mood comes atavistically, and

with something of a sense of pursuing Furies: he often eulogizes the ancestral spirits in order to placate them:

> So I lie, who find no peace
> Night or day, no slight release
> From the unremittent beat
> Made by cruel padded feet
> Walking through my body's street.
> Up and down they go, and back,
> Beating out a jungle track.

But if Cullen has given us the exotic, emotional look on the race past, Hughes has given us what is racially more significant,—a franker, more spiritual loyalty, without sense of painful choice or contradiction, a retrospective recall that is intimate and natural. For him,

> We should have a land of trees
> Bowed down with chattering parrots
> Brilliant as the day,
> And not this land where birds are gray.

The moods of Africa, the old substances of primitive life, are for this growing school of thought a precious heritage, acceptable as a new artistic foundation; the justification of the much discussed racial difference, a source of new inspiration in the old Antæan strength. But if there is to be any lasting restatement of the African tradition, it cannot be merely retrospective. That is why even this point of view must merge into a transposition of the old elemental values to modern modes of insight. This is just on the horizon edge in Negro poetry and art, and is one of the goals of racialism in the new æsthetic of Negro life. No better advance statement has been made than Mae Cowdery's lines:

> I will take from the hearts
> Of black men—
> Prayers their lips
> Are 'fraid to utter

And turn their coarseness
Into a beauty of the jungle
Whence they came.

If and when this is achieved the last significance of race in our art and poetry will have manifested itself beyond question or challenge.

To trace Negro poetry in the way we have done, does some necessary violence to the unity of individual writers who combine several strands in their poetic temperaments. It also overlooks some of the purely universal and general poetry which others have contributed. But it will give some definite impression of the recent racial and cultural revival which Negro poets are expressing and of the interesting and unique developments that the interaction of the white and black races in America is producing. And incontestably the artistic product of this generation gauges the rising tide of Negro culture and the deep artistic potentialities of Negro art. The position of the Negro in American culture today is strategic and promising; it is his spiritual recompense for generations of long-suffering and will for some generations yet furnish the basis of his contribution to the spiritual treasury of the nation.

NEGRO'S GIFT TO AMERICAN MUSIC

By CLARENCE CAMERON WHITE

In recent years we have heard much about a national spirit, a national note in music, and of the all-important necessity and desirability of working out an American national music. It may be that the persons who advocate these ideas know what a "national note" in music is, as one knows what the national spirit is. For my part I confess that I feel some doubt as to just what it is. Those who have taken this point of view have placed before us statements as to what other nations have done, the French, the Scandinavians, the Russians, the Germans. And the claim put forth is that we Americans also must work out our musical independence. But does that mean a national note?

Are the people of the United States a nation in the sense that the term applies to the people of France, the people of Norway (the country of Grieg and Sinding), to the people of Russia before the recent war? National means characteristic of a nation, peculiar to a nation, applies to all the people of a country, those under one government, not for the people of one section, not those of one class, not those of one blood or race. Lincoln said that a nation could not exist part free, part bound. No more can we have a genuine American music unless it be the music of all who have a share in the appellation, American. The music of one group of persons may be the music of Americans but it has not, on that account alone, the right to the exclusive use of the term American.

The meaning of this thought is that just as our nation is made up of a number of smaller groups, politically, industrially, and racially, so also our music is made up of the

contribution of different classes of people. In the colonial days and in the period following the founding of the American state music was a reflection of the American nation and up to the Civil War was brought from Europe by the people who came here to build a nation. The time was when music education in the United States was mainly in the hands of persons of foreign birth, when students were of the opinion that only by going to Europe to study was musical salvation a possibility. And so they went, much to the financial benefit of musicians in certain parts of Europe. When some of these seekers for truth in music came back home to share in the development of music in the United States they preached the doctrine that American music must remain in swaddling clothes unless serious-minded, thinking, trained musicians should seek to determine the qualities which are inherent in American product or real creative quality, and thus make it possible to set for our students a standard, a national character in its musical art as is the case in other lines.

Starting with the notion that it must be thoroughly distinctive some of these seekers for a new and individual note claimed that the musical idiom of the North American Indians offered the best and most appropriate material. Others have turned to the simple vivid ideas of the songs of Stephen C. Foster, and acclaimed them as truly American, and as the proper basis for American music. Certain strong, piquant rhythmic characteristics of the marches by Sousa have been labeled as especially and peculiarly American. And we have come, in these later days, to consider "rag-time" as a distinctively American note. In a broader way we can include music of this type in the classification of music peculiar to the American Negro, not simply written by composers of that race, but also music which is based upon development from material in that idiom.

The importance of this question of race is not to be underestimated. Beethoven is classed among German composers, yet his ancestry was from the people on the west

side of the Rhine, from the neighborhood of Antwerp. His mother was of German origin and the environment in which the boy was raised was that of the Rhine country, not the north of Germany which produced the Prussian spirit.

Haydn has been classed among German composers although his nationality was Austrian, and his family was Croatian, and therefore more Slav than Teutonic. Mozart was a child of Austrian environment, yet he has been loosely classified as a German master. His father was a Suabian or Bavarian, and therefore from the South of Germany, in no sense a product of what in later years has been considered typically German. In thinking about Mozart we are not to lose sight of the fact that Vienna and Berlin are not both German in the same sense of the word.

Rubinstein was in no sense a Russian of the same characteristics as those of most or all of the men who have made the Young Russian School of Music. Scriabine, Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel, Elgar, Cyril Scott, Ornstein, have characteristics which one feels impelled to consider not national, but racial and individual. Granted that the fundamental idea as to the function of music may be the same, the actual working out which each one of these men has done is different. Debussy and Ravel are both French as to nationality, but not the same in music; so also do Scriabine and Stravinsky differ, and Elgar and Scott, and Ornstein from every other composer who has the right to American franchise.

We recall that MacDowell objected to being classed as an American composer. Properly interpreted I believe this meant as a composer of American music not as a composer of American nationality. In one of his lectures at Columbia University MacDowell said that "nationalism in music is an outward garment which is a result of certain habits of thought, a mannerism of language so to speak." The ideal American music, in the sense of national music, is not

easy to formulate or describe. But if we will make it include music based on material or habits of expression and thought which are distinctively American we may venture to call it national. This will include music melody, harmony, or structure which are more American than European. For the purpose of this discussion we have preferred to narrow the question to one phase of the broad view, and consider but one phase, to class the music of the Negro artist as racial, first of all, and not primarily national, one element in the great question of American music, with as much claim to the term American as any other music produced in this country. It belongs here. We do not want to disown it. What we ask is that it be developed just as any other line of art is to be increased and strengthened.

In America today we have somewhere between ten and twelve million people of African descent. The progress of any people will be greatest by those groups which are in close contact with civilizing influence. It stands to reason then that, musically, the Negro has made his greatest progress during his American residence. To America, the Negro could only bring his music and with his freedom his music was one of his greatest possessions. It is only natural that with a limited opportunity for improvement he turned with greatest zeal to the development of this gift.

The so-called Negro spiritual or plantation song is so well known today that it may be of interest to recall that as far back as 1871 these songs were introduced to America by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, a band of Negro students from Fisk University at Nashville, Tennessee.

The Negro's rising standard of education which carries a deeper appreciation of the æsthetic has also brought a racial consciousness and pride in his musical background. He knows and is proud of the Negro blood in Chevalier Saint-George, born in 1745 in the town of Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, who was a pupil of Gossec. St.-George, wrote

two concertos for violin and orchestra and numerous quartettes. Lawrence declares that Gossec and St.-George were the first French musicians to write string quartettes. We find the MSS. of his "L'Amant Anonyme" in the library of the Paris Conservatoire. St.-George died in Paris June, 1799. There is a street in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, which since November, 1912, has borne the name of St.-George.

The Negro is also proud of the Negro blood of George Augustus Bridgetower, violinist, born about 1779 in Biola in Poland. Bridgetower was a friend and associate of Beethoven and it was he who played the famous "Kreutzer" sonata with the composer at Vienna in 1805. In June, 1811, Bridgetower took the degree of Mus. B. at Cambridge. He died in England about 1845. A complete account of his career may be found in Thayer's "Life of Beethoven."

Edmund Dede, a New Orleans Negro, born in 1829, entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1857 and took high rank as a violinist; composed numerous orchestral works. Perhaps the best known was "Le Palmier Overture." He died at Bordeaux, France, where for many years he was conductor of the Opera.

One other Negro who achieved lasting fame in Europe was Joseph White, born at Matanzas, Cuba, January 17, 1836. By advice of Gottschalk he was sent to Paris in 1855, where he became an honor pupil of Alard, winning the first prize in violin playing in 1856; composed a violin concerto and numerous small works. White was appointed a teacher at the Paris Conservatoire in 1864; he visited America in 1876, playing in New York and Boston with great success. On his Boston program in March, 1876, he played the Mendelssohn Concerto Op. 64 and the Bach Chaconne. He died in Paris in 1920.

The musical world at large knows full well of the Anglo-African composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, born in London, August 15, 1875, and who achieved lasting fame in thirty-seven short years. He died in London, September

1, 1912. Herbert Antcliffe calls him "one of the most original thinkers among musicians of his generation."

The achievements of these five musicians of Negro blood are achievements of which any race might be proud, and the American Negro realizes that with proper training he may reflect a degree of credit upon American art. On the whole here in America the musical output has been both large and creditable, although of course comparatively little known. Few names have appeared and only here and there work that could be called really first class, but this is not a peculiarity of Negro music. The sum of accomplishment is but an imperfect indication of what the Negro race is capable of in America with proper technical training. And this proper training is eagerly being obtained by the present-day Negro musician. The Negro youth is acquiring a degree of confidence and pride in his race that is awakening in him a new spirit, and his true poet soul which has found expression in a humble way through his plantation melodies begins to mount to sublimer heights of expression. The storehouses from which he may draw are filled with material, albeit most of these storehouses are the minds of his hoary-haired parents and grandparents who are fast disappearing from his midst.

Many people in speaking of Negro music are inclined to think of it as consisting solely of Negro spirituals. They are possibly ignorant of the wealth of Negro compositions, both those based upon the spirituals and other Negro themes and music which is not Negroid in character or in any way connected with or expressive of racial feeling or idiom. For the past eight or ten years there has been a steady increase in the number of services for church choirs given over to sacred compositions, and works of Negro composers for vocal solos, mixed choruses, pipe organ and violin solos. It is perhaps natural that the Negro singer has attracted attention first rather than the Negro composer. It is an accepted fact that even the untrained Negro voice has an appealing quality that arrests one's attention; but

the Negro singer of today has not lost sight of the fact that proper training of the voice is essential to artistic singing, so we find most of them before the public today with highly trained voices.

Most American musicians are acquainted with the name of Harry T. Burleigh, baritone soloist of St. George Church of New York and at the Temple Emanu-El in the same city. Mr. Burleigh was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, where he received his early education, graduating from high school in 1887. Later he was a scholarship pupil at the National Conservatory of Music, New York, and at one time a teacher of singing at this school. He traveled extensively abroad and it has been his rare privilege to sing for the King and Queen of England, Prince Henry of Prussia, Prince Louis of Battenberg, the Crown Prince of Sweden, and many other members of the nobility. A pioneer for the Negro's right to enter the field of serious art, Burleigh has worked for years in New York, never lowering his standard, never doing anything that would compromise his dignity as a musician and never allowing himself to be beaten back by prejudice. Quietly, unassumingly but firmly, he maintained his hard-earned place among professional musicians.

The poignant melodies of the Negro spiritual are heard in the land. For many years they have been sung by the glee clubs of Southern schools and now they have emerged from their scholastic seclusion and become the popular music of every-day life, along with the work songs and the folk ballads of the old South.

Today the appeal of the spirituals seems universal. They have blossomed forth on symphony orchestra programs. They are to be heard in John Alden Carpenter's new ballet, "Skyscraper," at the Metropolitan Opera House.

The wave of popularity on which the spiritual is riding promises to revive many of the genuine work songs, ballads, plantation melodies and other secular songs of the South. This music has a color, a flavor, a richness of its

own. Here are songs redolent of box cars, railroad ties and levees. They have been wrung from the sweat of construction crews and chain gangs. Some of them are the product of painful imprisonment, hard labor and crushing conditions of existence. Others shout of simple joys, homely blessings, racy humors and lusty, red-blooded vulgarities. One group mirrors scenes of milder hue, singing of the soft languor of Southern nights.

Side by side with the spirituals have arisen the secular songs, which, of course, rank below their religious brethren in genius and inspiration. Northern song writers and musical carpet-baggers found the South a valuable source of supply. Led by such pioneers as Stephen C. Foster and Louis Gottschalk, they listened to roustabouts rolling cotton bales aboard the Mississippi river piers; they saw the lurid glow of turpentine stills and heard the songs of the tappers. They imbibed some of the atmosphere of old bayous and water-fronts, of pillared porticos and rambling mansions, and they caught the chanteys of blacks working West India vessels in Charleston and Savannah harbors.

In America today we find a well equipped group of Negro composers who are contributing their share to American art and it is not an idle supposition that the Negro will be an important factor in establishing the long looked for American school of composition.

ESSAYS

Historical

THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

From The Souls of Black Folk

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea. It was a phase of this problem that caused the Civil War; and however much they who marched South and North in 1861 may have fixed on the technical points of union and local autonomy as a shibboleth, all nevertheless knew, as we know, that the question of Negro slavery was the real cause of the conflict. Curious it was, too, how the deeper question ever forced itself to the surface despite effort and disclaimer. No sooner had Northern armies touched Southern soil than this old question, newly guised, sprang from the earth: What shall be done with Negroes? Peremptory military commands, this way and that, could not answer the query; the Emancipation Proclamation seemed but to broaden and intensify the difficulties; and the War Amendments made the Negro problems of to-day.

It is the aim of this essay to study the period of history from 1861 to 1872 so far as it relates to the American Negro. In effect, this tale of the dawn of Freedom is an account of that government of men called the Freedmen's Bureau—one of the most singular and interesting of the attempts made by a great nation to grapple with vast problems of race and social condition.

The war has naught to do with slaves, cried Congress, the President, and the Nation; and yet no sooner had the armies, East and West, penetrated Virginia and Tennessee than fugutive slaves appeared within their lines. They

came at night, when the flickering camp-fires shone like vast unsteady stars along the black horizon: old men and thin, with gray and tufted hair; women, with frightened eyes, dragging whimpering hungry children; men and girls, stalwart and gaunt—a horde of starving vagabonds, homeless, helpless, and pitiable, in their dark distress. Two methods of treating these newcomers seemed equally logical to opposite sorts of minds. Ben Butler, in Virginia, quickly declared slave property contraband of war, and put the fugitives to work, while Frémont, in Missouri, declared the slaves free under martial law. Butler's action was approved, but Frémont's was hastily countermanded, and his successor, Halleck, saw things differently. "Hereafter," he commanded, "no slaves should be allowed to come into your lines at all; if any come without your knowledge, when owners call for them, deliver them." Such a policy was difficult to enforce; some of the black refugees declared themselves freemen, others showed that their masters had deserted them, and still others were captured with forts and plantations. Evidently, too, slaves were a source of strength to the Confederacy, and were being used as laborers and producers. "They constitute a military resource," wrote Secretary Cameron, late in 1861; "and being such, that they should not be turned over to the enemy is too plain to discuss." So gradually the tone of the army chiefs changed; Congress forbade the rendition of fugitives, and Butler's "contrabands" were welcomed as military laborers. This complicated rather than solved the problem, for now the scattering fugitives became a steady stream, which flowed faster as the armies marched.

Then the long-headed man with care-chiseled face who sat in the White House saw the inevitable, and emancipated the slaves of rebels on New Year's, 1863. A month later Congress called earnestly for the Negro soldiers whom the Act of July, 1862, had half grudgingly allowed to enlist. Thus the barriers were leveled and the deed was done. The stream of fugitives swelled to a flood, and anxious

army officers kept inquiring: "What must be done with slaves, arriving almost daily? Are we to find food and shelter for women and children?"

It was a Pierce of Boston who pointed out the way, and thus became in a sense the founder of the Freedmen's Bureau. He was a firm friend of Secretary Chase; and when, in 1861, the care of slaves and abandoned lands devolved upon the Treasury officials, Pierce was especially detailed from the ranks to study the conditions. First, he cared for the refugees at Fortress Monroe; and then, after Sherman had captured Hilton Head, Pierce was sent there to found his Port Royal experiment of making free workingmen out of slaves. Before his experiment was barely started, however, the problem of the fugitives had assumed such proportions that it was taken from the hands of the over-burdened Treasury Department and given to the army officials. Already centres of massed freedmen were forming at Fortress Monroe, Washington, New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Corinth, Columbus, Ky., and Cairo, Ill., as well as at Port Royal. Army chaplains found here new and fruitful fields; "superintendents of contrabands" multiplied, and some attempt at systematic work was made by enlisting the able-bodied men and giving work to the others.

Then came the Freedmen's Aid societies, born of the touching appeals from Pierce and from these other centres of distress. There was the American Missionary Association, sprung from the Amistad, and now full-grown for work; the various church organizations, the National Freedmen's Relief Association, the American Freedmen's Union, the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission—in all fifty or more active organizations, which sent clothes, money, school-books, and teachers southward. All they did was needed, for the destitution of the freedmen was often reported as "too appalling for belief," and the situation was daily growing worse rather than better.

And daily, too, it seemed more plain that this was no ordinary matter of temporary relief, but a national crisis;

for here loomed a labor problem of vast dimensions. Masses of Negroes stood idle, or, if they worked spasmodically, were never sure of pay; and if perchance they received pay, squandered the new thing thoughtlessly. In these and other ways were camp life and the new liberty demoralizing the freedmen. The broader economic organization thus clearly demanded sprang up here and there as accident and local conditions determined. Here it was that Pierce's Port Royal plan of leased plantations and guided workmen pointed out the rough way. In Washington the military governor, at the urgent appeal of the superintendent, opened confiscated estates to the cultivation of the fugitives and there in the shadow of the dome gathered black farm villages. General Dix gave over estates to the freedmen of Fortress Monroe, and so on, South and West. The government and benevolent societies furnished the means of cultivation, and the Negro turned again slowly to work. The systems of control, thus started, rapidly grew, here and there, into strange little governments, like that of General Banks in Louisiana, with the ninety thousand black subjects, its fifty thousand guided laborers, and its annual budget of one hundred thousand dollars and more. It made out four thousand pay-rolls a year, registered all freedmen, inquired into grievances and redressed them, laid and collected taxes, and established a system of public schools. So, too, Colonel Eaton, the superintendent of Tennessee and Arkansas, ruled over one hundred thousand freedmen, leased and cultivated seven thousand acres of cotton land, and fed ten thousand paupers a year. In South Carolina was General Saxton, with his deep interest in black folk. He succeeded Pierce and the Treasury officials, and sold forfeited estates, leased abandoned plantations, encouraged schools, and received from Sherman, after that terribly picturesque march to the sea, thousands of the wretched camp followers.

Three characteristic things one might have seen in Sherman's raid through Georgia, which threw the new situation

in shadowy relief: the Conqueror, the Conquered, and the Negro. Some see all significance in the grim front of the destroyer, and some in the bitter sufferers of the Lost Cause. But to me neither soldier nor fugitive speaks with so deep a meaning as that dark human cloud that clung like remorse on the rear of those swift columns, swelling at times to half their size, almost engulfing and choking them. In vain were they ordered back, in vain were bridges hewn from beneath their feet; on they trudged and writhed and surged, until they rolled into Savannah a starved and naked horde of tens of thousands. There too came the characteristic military remedy: "The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice-fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of Negroes now made free by act of war." So read the celebrated "Field-order Number Fifteen."

All these experiments, orders, and systems were bound to attract and perplex the government and the nation. Directly after the Emancipation Proclamation, Representative Eliot had introduced a bill creating a Bureau of Emancipation; but it was never reported. The following June a committee of inquiry, appointed by the Secretary of War, reported in favor of a temporary bureau for the "improvement, protection, and employment of refugee freedmen," on much the same lines as were afterwards followed. Petitions came in to President Lincoln from distinguished citizens and organizations, strongly urging a comprehensive and unified plan of dealing with the freedmen, under a bureau which should be "charged with the study of plans and execution of measures for easily guiding, and in every way judiciously and humanely aiding, the passage of our emancipated and yet to be emancipated blacks from the old condition of forced labor to their new state of voluntary industry."

Some half-hearted steps were taken to accomplish this, in part, by putting the whole matter again in charge of the

special Treasury agents. Laws of 1863 and 1864 directed them to take charge of and lease abandoned lands for periods not exceeding twelve months, and to "provide in such leases, or otherwise, for the employment and general welfare" of the freedmen. Most of the army officers greeted this as a welcome relief from perplexing "Negro affairs," and Secretary Fessenden, July 29, 1864, issued an excellent system of regulations, which were afterward closely followed by General Howard. Under Treasury agents, large quantities of land were leased in the Mississippi Valley, and many Negroes were employed; but in August, 1864, the new regulations were suspended for reasons of "public policy," and the army was again in control.

Meanwhile Congress had turned its attention to the subject; and in March the House passed a bill by a majority of two establishing a Bureau for Freedmen in the War Department. Charles Sumner, who had charge of the bill in the Senate, argued that freedmen and abandoned lands ought to be under the same department, and reported a substitute for the House bill attaching the Bureau to the Treasury Department. This bill passed, but too late for action by the House. The debates wandered over the whole policy of the administration and the general question of slavery, without touching very closely the specific merits of the measure in hand. Then the national election took place; and the administration, with a vote of renewed confidence from the country, addressed itself to the matter more seriously. A conference between the two branches of Congress agreed upon a carefully drawn measure which contained the chief provisions of Sumner's bill, but made the proposed organization a department independent of both the War and the Treasury officials. The bill was conservative, giving the new department "general superintendence of all freedmen." Its purpose was to "establish regulations" for them, protect them, lease them lands, adjust their wages, and appear in civil and military courts as their "next friend." There were many limitations attached

to the powers thus granted, and the organization was made permanent. Nevertheless, the Senate defeated the bill, and a new conference committee was appointed. This committee reported a new bill, February 28, which was whirled through just as the session closed, and became the Act of 1865 establishing in the War Department a "Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands."

This last compromise was a hasty bit of legislation, vague and uncertain in outline. A Bureau was created, "to continue during the present War of Rebellion, and for one year thereafter," to which was given "the supervision and management of all abandoned lands and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen," under "such rules and regulations as may be presented by the head of the Bureau and approved by the President." A Commissioner, appointed by the President and Senate, was to control the Bureau, with an office force not exceeding ten clerks. The President might also appoint assistant commissioners in the seceded States, and to all these offices military officials might be detailed at regular pay. The Secretary of War could issue rations, clothing, and fuel to the destitute, and all abandoned property was placed in the hands of the Bureau for eventual lease and sale to ex-slaves in forty-acre parcels.

Thus did the United States government definitely assume charge of the emancipated Negro as the ward of the nation. It was a tremendous undertaking. Here at a stroke of the pen was erected a government of millions of men—and not ordinary men either, but black men emasculated by a peculiarly complete system of slavery, centuries old; and now, suddenly, violently, they come into a new birthright, at a time of war and passion, in the midst of the stricken and embittered population of their former masters. Any man might well have hesitated to assume charge of such a work, with vast responsibilities, indefinite powers, and limited resources. Probably no one but a soldier would have answered such a call promptly; and, indeed, no one

but a soldier could be called, for Congress had appropriated no money for salaries and expenses.

Less than a month after the weary Emancipator passed to his rest, his successor assigned Major-General Oliver O. Howard to duty as Commissioner of the new Bureau. He was a Maine man, then only thirty-five years of age. He had marched with Sherman to the sea, had fought well at Gettysburg, and but the year before had been assigned to the command of the Department of Tennessee. An honest man, with too much faith in human nature, little aptitude for business and intricate detail, he had had large opportunity of becoming acquainted at first hand with much of the work before him. And of that work it has been truly said that "no approximately correct history of civilization can ever be written which does not throw out in bold relief, as one of the great landmarks of political and social progress, the organization and administration of the Freedmen's Bureau."

On May 12, 1865, Howard was appointed; and he assumed the duties of his office promptly on the 15th, and began examining the field of work. A curious mess he looked upon; little despotisms, communistic experiments, slavery peonage, business speculations, organized charity, unorganized almsgiving—all reeling on under the guise of helping the freedmen, and all enshrined in the smoke and blood of war and the cursing and silence of angry men. On May 19 the new government—for a government it really was—issued its constitution; commissioners were to be appointed in each of the seceded States, who were to take charge of "all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen," and all relief and rations were to be given by their consent alone. The Bureau invited continued co-operation with benevolent societies, and declared: "It will be the object of all commissioners to introduce practicable systems of compensated labor," and to establish schools. Forthwith nine assistant commissioners were appointed. They were to hasten to their fields of work; seek gradually to close

relief establishments, and make the destitute self-supporting; act as courts of law where there were no courts, or where Negroes were not recognized in them as free; establish the institution of marriage among ex-slaves, and keep records; see that freedmen were free to choose their employers, and help in making fair contracts for them; and finally, the circular said: "Simple good faith for which we hope on all hands for those concerned in the passing away of slavery will especially relieve the assistant commissioners in the discharge of their duties toward the freedmen, as well as promote the general welfare."

No sooner was the work started, and the general system and local organization in some measure begun, than two grave difficulties appeared which changed largely the theory and outcome of Bureau Work. First, there were the abandoned lands of the South. It had long been the more or less definitely expressed theory of the North that all the chief problems of Emancipation might be settled by establishing the slaves on the forfeited lands of their masters—a sort of poetic justice, said some. But this poetry done into solemn prose meant either wholesale confiscation of private property in the South, or vast appropriations. Now Congress had not appropriated a cent, and no sooner did the proclamations of general amnesty appear than the eight hundred thousand acres of abandoned lands in the hands of the Freedmen's Bureau melted quickly away. The second difficulty lay in perfecting the local organizations of the Bureau throughout the wide field of work. Making a new machine and sending out officials of duly ascertained fitness for a great work of social reform is no child's task; but this task was even harder, for a new central organization had to be fitted on a heterogeneous and confused but already existing system of relief and control of ex-slaves; and the agents available for this work must be sought for in an army still busy with war operations—men in the very nature of the case ill fitted for delicate social work—or among the questionable camp followers of an invading

host. Thus, after a year's work, vigorously as it was pushed, the problem looked even more difficult to grasp and solve than at the beginning. Nevertheless, three things that year's work did, well worth the doing; it relieved a vast amount of physical suffering; it transported seven thousand fugitives from congested centres back to the farms, and, best of all, it inaugurated the crusade of the New England schoolma'am.

The annals of this North Crusade are yet to be written—the tale of a mission that seemed to our age far more quixotic than the quest of St. Louis seemed to his. Behind the mists of ruin and rapine waved the calico dresses of women who dared, and after the hoarse mouthings of the field guns rang the rhythm of the alphabet. Rich and poor they were, serious and curious. Bereaved now of a father, now of a brother, now of more than these, they came seeking a life work in planting New England schoolhouses among the white and black of the South. They did their work well. In that first year they taught one hundred thousand souls, and more.

Evidently, Congress must soon legislate again on the hastily organized Bureau, which had so quickly grown into wide significance and vast possibilities. An institution such as that was well-nigh as difficult to end as to begin. Early in 1866 Congress took up the matter, when Senator Trumbull, of Illinois, introduced a bill to extend the Bureau and enlarge its powers. This measure received, at the hands of Congress, far more thorough discussion and attention than its predecessor. The war cloud had thinned enough to allow a clearer conception of the work of Emancipation. The champions of the bill argued that the strengthening of the Freedman's Bureau was still a military necessity; that it was needed for the proper carrying out of the Thirteenth Amendment, and was a work of sheer justice to the ex-slave, at a trifling cost to the government. The opponents of the measure declared that the war was over, and the necessity for war measures past;

that the Bureau, by reason of its extraordinary powers, was clearly unconstitutional in time of peace, and was destined to irritate the South and pauperize the freedmen, at a final cost of possibly hundreds of millions. These two arguments were unanswered, and indeed unanswerable: the one that extraordinary powers of the Bureau threatened the civil rights of all citizens; and the other that the government must have power to do what manifestly must be done, and that present abandonment of the freedmen meant their practical re-enslavement. The bill which finally passed enlarged and made permanent the Freedmen's Bureau. It was promptly vetoed by President Johnson as "unconstitutional," "unnecessary," and "extrajudicial," and failed of passage over the veto. Meantime, however, the breach between Congress and the President began to broaden, and a modified form of the lost bill was finally passed over the President's second veto, July 16.

The Act of 1866 gave the Freedmen's Bureau its final form—the form by which it will be known to posterity and judged of men. It extended the existence of the Bureau to July, 1868; it authorized additional assistant commissioners, the retention of army officers mustered out of regular service, the sale of certain forfeited lands to freedmen on nominal terms, the sale of Confederate public property for Negro schools, and a wider field of judicial interpretation and cognizance. The government of the unreconstructed South was thus put very largely in the hands of the Freedmen's Bureau, especially as in many cases the departmental military commander was now made also assistant commissioner. It was thus that the Freedmen's Bureau became a full-fledged government of men. It made laws, executed them and interpreted them; it laid and collected taxes, defined and punished crime, maintained and used military force, and dictated such measures as it thought necessary and proper for the accomplishment of its varied ends. Naturally, all these powers were not exercised continuously nor to their fullest extent; and yet, as

General Howard has said, "scarcely any subject that has to be legislated upon in civil society failed, at one time or another, to demand the action of this singular Bureau."

To understand and criticize intelligently so vast a work, one must not forget an instant the drift of things in the later sixties. Lee had surrendered, Lincoln was dead, and Johnson and Congress were at loggerheads; the Thirteenth Amendment was adopted, the Fourteenth pending, and the Fifteenth declared in force in 1870. Guerrilla raiding, the ever-present flickering after-flame of war, was spending its force against the Negroes, and all the Southern land was awakening as from some wild dream to poverty and social revolution. In a time of perfect calm, amid willing neighbors and streaming wealth, the social uplifting of four million slaves to an assured and self-sustaining place in the body politic and economic would have been a herculean task; but when to the inherent difficulties of so delicate and nice a social operation were added the spite and hate of conflict, the hell of war; when suspicion and cruelty were rife, and gaunt Hunger wept beside Bereavement,—in such a case, the work of any instrument of social regeneration was in large part foredoomed to failure. The very name of the Bureau stood for a thing in the South which for two centuries and better, men had refused even to argue,—that life amid free Negroes was simply unthinkable, the maddest of experiments.

The agents that the Bureau could command varied all the way from unselfish philanthropists to narrow-minded busybodies and thieves; and even though it be true that the average was far better than the worst, it was the occasional fly that helped spoil the ointment.

Then amid all crouched the freed slave, bewildered between friend and foe. He had emerged from slavery,—not the worst slavery in the world, not a slavery that made all life unbearable, rather a slavery that had here and there something of kindliness, fidelity, and happiness,—but withal slavery, which so far as human aspiration and desert

were concerned, classed the black man and the ox together. And the Negro knew full well that, whatever their deeper convictions may have been, Southern men had fought with desperate energy to perpetuate this slavery under which the black masses, with half-articulated thought, had writhed and shivered. They welcomed freedom with a cry. They shrank from the master who still strove for their chains; they fled to the friends that had freed them, even though those friends stood ready to use them as a club for driving the recalcitrant South back into loyalty. So the cleft between the white and black South grew. Idle to say it never should have been; it was inevitable as its results were pitiable. Curiously incongruous elements were left arrayed against each other,—the North, the government, the carpet-bagger, and the slave, here; and there, all the South that was white, whether gentleman or vagabond, honest man or rascal, lawless, murderer or martyr to duty.

Thus it is doubly difficult to write of this period calmly, so intense was the feeling, so mighty the human passions that swayed and blinded men. Amid it all, two figures ever stand to typify that day to coming ages,—the one, a gray-haired gentleman, whose fathers had quit themselves like men, whose sons lay in nameless graves; who bowed to the evil of slavery because its abolition threatened untold ill to all; who stood at last, in the evening of life, a blighted, ruined form, with hate in his eyes;—and the other, a form hovering dark and mother-like, her awful face black with the mists of centuries, had aforetime quailed at that white master's command, had bent in love over the cradles of his sons and daughters, and closed in death the sunken eyes of his wife,—aye, too, at his behest had laid herself low to his lust, and borne a tawny man-child to the world, only to see her dark boy's limbs scattered to the winds by midnight marauders riding after "damned Niggers." These were the saddest sights of that woeful day; and no man clasped the hands of these two passing figures of the present-past; but,

hating, they went to their long home, and, hating, their children's children live to-day.

Here, then, was the field of work for the Freedmen's Bureau; and since, with some hesitation, it was continued by the act of 1868 until 1869, let us look upon four years of its work as a whole. There were, in 1868, nine hundred Bureau officials scattered from Washington to Texas, ruling, directly and indirectly, many millions of men. The deeds of these rulers fall mainly under seven heads: the relief of physical suffering, the overseeing of the beginnings of free labor, the buying and selling of land, the establishment of schools, the paying of bounties, the administration of justice, and the financing of all these activities.

Up to June, 1869, over half a million patients had been treated by Bureau physicians and surgeons, and sixty hospitals and asylums had been in operation. In fifty months twenty-one million free rations were distributed at a cost of over four million dollars. Next came the difficult question of labor. First, thirty thousand black men were transported from the refuges and relief stations back to the farms, back to the critical trial of a new way of working. Plain instructions went out from Washington: the laborers must be free to choose their employers, no fixed rate of wages was prescribed, and there was to be no peonage or forced labor. So far, so good; but where local agents differed *toto coelo* in capacity and character, where the *personnel* was continually changing, the outcome was necessarily varied. The largest element of success lay in the fact that the majority of the freedmen were willing, even eager, to work. So labor contracts were written,—fifty thousand in a single State,—laborers advised, wages guaranteed, and employers supplied. In truth, the organization became a vast labor bureau,—not perfect, indeed, notably defective here and there, but on the whole successful beyond the dreams of thoughtful men. The two great obstacles which confronted the officials were the tyrant and the idler,—the slaveholder who was determined to perpetuate slavery under another name; and

the freedman who regarded freedom as perpetual rest,—the Devil and the Deep Sea.

In the work of establishing the Negroes as peasant proprietors, the Bureau was from the first handicapped and at last absolutely checked. Something was done, and larger things were planned; abandoned lands were leased so long as they remained in the hands of the Bureau, and a total revenue of nearly half a million dollars derived from black tenants. Some other lands to which the nation had gained title were sold on easy terms, and public lands were opened for settlement to the very few freedmen who had tools and capital. But the vision of "forty acres and a mule"—the righteous and reasonable ambition to become a landholder, which the nation had all but categorically promised the freedmen—was destined, in most cases, to bitter disappointment. And those men of marvelous hindsight who are today seeking to preach the Negro back to the present peonage of soil know well, or ought to know, that the opportunity of binding the Negro peasant willingly to the soil was lost on that day when the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau had to go to South Carolina and tell the weeping freedmen, after their years of toil, that their land was not theirs, that there was a mistake—somewhere. If by 1874, the Georgia Negro alone owned three hundred and fifty thousand acres of land, it was by grace of his thrift rather than by bounty of the government.

The greatest success of the Freedmen's Bureau lay in the planting of the free school among Negroes, and the idea of free elementary education among all classes in the South. It not only called the school mistresses through the benevolent agencies and built them schoolhouses, but it helped discover and support such apostles of human culture as Edmund Ware, Samuel Armstrong, and Erastus Cravath. The opposition to Negro education in the South was at first bitter, and showed itself in ashes, insult, and blood; for the South believed an educated Negro to be a dangerous Negro. And the South was not wholly wrong; for edu-

cation among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have, an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction and discontent. Nevertheless, men strive to know. Perhaps some inkling of this paradox, even in the unquiet days of the Bureau, helped the bayonets allay an opposition to human training which still to-day lies smouldering in the South, but not flaming. Fisk, Atlanta, Howard, and Hampton were founded in these days, and six million dollars were expended for educational work, seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars of which the freedmen themselves gave of their poverty.

Such contributions, together with the buying of land and various other enterprises, showed that the ex-slave was handling some free capital already. The chief initial source of this was labor in the army, and his pay and bounty as a soldier. Payments to Negro soldiers were at first complicated by the ignorance of the recipients, and the fact that the quotas of colored regiments from Northern States were largely filled by recruits from the South, unknown to their fellow soldiers. Consequently, payments were accompanied by such frauds that Congress, by joint resolution in 1867, put the whole matter in the hands of the Freedmen's Bureau. In two years six million dollars was thus distributed to five thousand claimants, and in the end the sum exceeded eight million dollars. Even in this system fraud was frequent; but still the work put needed capital in the hands of practical paupers, and some, at least, was well spent.

The most perplexing and least successful part of the Bureau's work lay in the exercise of its judicial functions. The regular Bureau court consisted of one representative of the employer, one of the Negro, and one of the Bureau. If the Bureau could have maintained a perfectly judicial attitude, this arrangement would have been ideal, and must, in time, have gained confidence; but the nature of its other activities and the character of its *personnel* prejudiced the Bureau in favor of the black litigants, and led

without doubt to much injustice and annoyance. On the other hand, to leave the Negro in the hands of the Southern courts was impossible. In a distracted land where slavery had hardly fallen, to keep the strong from wanton abuse of the weak, and the weak from gloating insolently over the half-shorn strength of the strong, was a thankless, hopeless task. The former masters of the land were peremptorily ordered about, seized, and imprisoned, and punished over and over again, with scant courtesy from army officers. The former slaves were intimidated, beaten, raped, and butchered by angry and revengeful men. Bureau courts tended to become centres simply for punishing whites, while the regular civil courts tended to become solely institutions for perpetuating the slavery of blacks. Almost every law and method ingenuity could devise was employed by the legislatures to reduce the Negroes to serfdom,—to make them the slaves of the State, if not of individual owners; while the Bureau officials too often were found striving to put the "bottom rail on top," and give the freedmen a power and independence which they could not yet use. It is all well enough for us of another generation to wax wise with advice to those who bore the burden in the heat of the day. It is full easy now to see that the man who lost home, fortune, and family at a stroke and saw his land ruled by "mules and niggers," was really benefited by the passing of slavery. It is not difficult now to say to the young freedman, cheated and cuffed about, who has seen his father's head beaten to a jelly and his own mother namelessly assaulted, that the meek shall inherit the earth. Above all, nothing is more convenient than to heap on the Freedmen's Bureau all the evils of that evil day, and damn it utterly for every mistake and blunder that was made.

All this is easy, but it is neither sensible nor just. Some one had blundered, but that was long before Oliver Howard was born; there was criminal aggression and heedless neglect, but without some system of control there would

have been far more than there was. Had that control been from within, the Negro would have been reënslaved, to all intents and purposes. Coming as the control did from without, perfect men and methods would have bettered all things; and, even with imperfect agents and questionable methods, the work accomplished was not undeserving of commendation.

Such was the dawn of Freedom; such was the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, which, summed up in brief, may be epitomized thus: For some fifteen million dollars, beside the sums spent before 1865, and the dole of benevolent societies, this Bureau set going a system of free labor, established a beginning of peasant proprietorship, secured the recognition of black freedmen before courts of law, and founded the free common school in the South. On the other hand, it failed to begin the establishment of goodwill between ex-masters and freedmen, to guard its work wholly from paternalistic methods which discouraged self-reliance, and to carry out to any considerable extent its implied promises to furnish the freedmen with land. Its successes were the result of hard work, supplemented by the aid of philanthropists and the eager striving of black men. Its failures were the result of bad local agents, the inherent difficulties of the work, and national neglect.

Such an institution, from its wide powers, great responsibilities, large control of moneys, and generally conspicuous position, was naturally open to repeated and bitter attack. It sustained a searching Congressional investigation at the instance of Fernando Wood in 1870. Its archives and few remaining functions were with blunt discourtesy transferred from Howard's control, in his absence, to the supervision of Secretary of War Belknap in 1872, on the Secretary's recommendation. Finally, in consequence of grave intimations of wrong-doing made by the Secretary and his subordinates, General Howard was court-martialed in 1874. In both of these trials the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau was officially exonerated from any wilful misdoing,

and his work commended. Nevertheless, many unpleasant things were brought to light,—the methods of transacting the business of the Bureau were faulty; several cases of defalcation were proved, and other frauds strongly suspected; there were some business transactions which savored of dangerous speculation, if not dishonesty; and around it all lay the smirch of the Freedmen's Bank.

Morally and practically, the Freedmen's Bank was part of the Freedmen's Bureau, although it had no legal connection with it. With the prestige of the government back of it, and a directing board of unusual respectability and national reputation, this banking institution had made a remarkable start in the development of that thrift among black folk which slavery had kept them from knowing. Then in one sad day came the crash,—all the hard-earned dollars of the freedmen disappeared; but that was the least of the loss,—all the faith in saving went too, and much of the faith in men; and that was a loss that a Nation, which to-day sneers at Negro shiftlessness, has never yet made good. Not even ten additional years of slavery could have done so much to throttle the thrift of the freedmen as the mismanagement and bankruptcy of the series of savings banks chartered by the Nation for their especial aid. Where all the blame should rest, it is hard to say; whether the Bureau and the Bank died chiefly by reason of the blows of its selfish friends or the dark machinations of its foes, perhaps even time will never reveal, for here lies unwritten history.

Of the foes without the Bureau, the bitterest were those who attacked not so much its conduct or policy under the law as the necessity for any such institution at all. Such attacks came primarily from the Border States and the South; and they were summed up by Senator Davis, of Kentucky, when he moved to entitle the act of 1866 a bill "to promote strife and conflict between the white and black races . . . by a grant of unconstitutional power." The argument gathered tremendous strength South and North; but

its very strength was its weakness. For, argued the plain common sense of the nation, if it is unconstitutional, unpractical, and futile for the nation to stand guardian over its helpless wards, then there is left but one alternative,—to make those wards their own guardians by arming them with the ballot. Moreover, the path of the practical politician pointed the same way; for, argued this opportunist, if we cannot peacefully reconstruct the South with white votes, we certainly can with black votes. So injustice and force joined hands.

The alternative thus offered the nation was not between full and restricted Negro suffrage; else every sensible man, black and white, would easily have chosen the latter. It was rather a choice between suffrage and slavery, after endless blood and gold had flowed to sweep human bondage away. Not a single Southern legislature stood ready to admit a Negro, under any conditions, to the polls; not a single Southern legislature believed free Negro labor was possible without a system of restrictions that took all its freedom away; there was scarcely a white man in the South who did not honestly regard Emancipation as a crime, and its practical nullification as a duty. In such a situation, the granting of the ballot to the black man was a necessity, the very least a guilty nation could grant a wronged race, and the only method of compelling the South to accept the results of the war. Thus Negro suffrage ended a civil war by beginning a race feud. And some felt gratitude toward the race thus sacrificed in its swaddling clothes on the altar of national integrity; and some felt and feel only indifference and contempt.

Had political exigencies been less pressing, the opposition to government guardianship of Negroes less bitter, and the attachment to the slave system less strong, the social seer can well imagine a far better policy, a permanent Freedmen's Bureau, with a national system of Negro schools; a carefully supervised employment and labor of-

fice; a system of impartial protection before the regular courts; and such institutions for social betterment as savings banks, land and building associations, and social settlements. All this vast expenditure of money and brains might have formed a great school of prospective citizenship, and solved, in a way we have not yet solved, the most perplexing and persistent of the Negro problems.

That such an institution was unthinkable in 1870 was due in part to certain acts of the Freedmen's Bureau itself. It came to regard its work as merely temporary, and Negro suffrage as a final answer to all present perplexities. The political ambition of many of its agents and *protégés* led it far afield into questionable activities, until the South, nursing its own deep prejudices, came easily to ignore all the good deeds of the Bureau and hate its very name with perfect hatred. So the Freedmen's Bureau died, and its child was the Fifteenth Amendment.

The passing of a great human institution before its work is done, like the untimely passing of a single soul, but leaves a legacy of striving for other men. The legacy of the Freedmen's Bureau is the heavy heritage of this generation. To-day, when new and vaster problems are destined to strain every fibre of the national mind and soul, would it not be well to count this legacy honestly and carefully? For this much all men know: despite compromise, war, and struggle, the Negro is not free. In the backwoods of the Gulf States, for miles and miles, he may not leave the plantation of his birth; in well-nigh the whole rural South the black farmers are peons, bound by law and custom to an economic slavery, from which the only escape is death or the penitentiary. In the most cultured sections and cities of the South the Negroes are a segregated, servile caste, with restricted rights and privileges. Before the courts, both in law and custom they stand on a different and peculiar basis. Taxation without representation is the rule of their political life. And the result of all this is, and in nature

must have been, lawlessness and crime. That is the large legacy of the Freedmen's Bureau, the work it did not do because it could not.

I have seen a land right merry with the sun, where children sing, and rolling hills lie like passioned women wanton with harvest. And there in the King's Highway sat and sits a figure veiled and bowed, by which the traveler's footsteps hasten as they go. On the tainted air broods fear. Three centuries' thought has been the raising and unveiling of that bowed human heart, and now behold a century new for the duty and the deed. The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.

THE NEGRO DIGS UP HIS PAST

By ARTHUR A. SCHOMBURG

The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future. Though it is orthodox to think of America as the one country where it is unnecessary to have a past, what is a luxury for the nation as a whole becomes a prime social necessity for the Negro. For him, a group tradition must supply compensation for persecution, and pride of race the antidote for prejudice. History must restore what slavery took away, for it is the social damage of slavery that the present generations must repair and offset. So among the rising democratic millions we find the Negro thinking more collectively, more retrospectively than the rest, and apt, out of the very pressure of the present, to become the most enthusiastic antiquarian of them all.

Vindicating evidences of individual achievement have as a matter of fact been gathered and treasured for over a century: Abbé Grégoire's liberal-minded book on Negro notables in 1808 was the pioneer effort; it has been followed at intervals by less-known and often less-discriminating compendiums of exceptional men and women of African stock. But this sort of thing was on the whole pathetically over-corrective, ridiculously over-laudatory; it was apologetics turned into biography. A true historical sense develops slowly and with difficulty under such circumstances. But to-day, even if for the ultimate purpose of group justification, history has become less a matter of argument and more a matter of record. There is the definite desire and determination to have a history, well-documented, widely known at least within race circles, and ad-

ministered as a stimulating and inspiring tradition for the coming generations.

Gradually, as the study of the Negro's past has come out of the vagaries of rhetoric and propaganda and become systematic and scientific, three outstanding conclusions have been established:

First, that the Negro has been, throughout the centuries of controversy, an active collaborator, and often a pioneer, in the struggle for his own freedom and advancement. This is true to a degree which makes it the more surprising that it has not been recognized earlier.

Second, that by virtue of their being regarded as something "exceptional," even by friends and well-wishers, Negroes of attainment and genius have been unfairly disassociated from the group, and group credit lost accordingly.

Third, that the remote racial origins of the Negro, far from being what the race and the world have been given to understand, offer a record of credible group achievement, when scientifically viewed, and more important still, that they are of vital general interest because of their bearing upon the beginnings and early development of culture.

With such crucial truths to document and establish, an ounce of fact is worth a pound of controversy. So the Negro historian to-day digs under the spot where his predecessor stood and argued. Not long ago, the Public Library of Harlem housed a special exhibition of books, pamphlets, prints and old engravings, that simply said, to skeptic and believer alike, to scholar and school-child, to proud black and astonished white, "Here is the evidence." Assembled from the rapidly growing collections of the leading Negro book-collectors and research societies, there were in these cases, materials not only for the first true writing of Negro history, but for the rewriting of many important paragraphs of our common American history. Slow though it be, historical truth is no exception to the proverb.

Here among the rarities of early Negro Americana was Jupiter Hammon's "Address to the Negroes of the State

of New York," edition of 1787, with the first American Negro poet's famous: "If we should ever get to Heaven, we shall find nobody to reproach us for being black, or for being slaves." Here was Phyllis Wheatley's MSS. poem of 1767, addressed to the students of Harvard, her spirited encomiums upon George Washington and the Revolutionary Cause, and John Marrant's St. John's Day eulogy to the "Brothers of African Lodge, No. 459," delivered at Boston in 1784. Here, too, were Lemuel Haynes' Vermont commentaries on the American Revolution and his learned sermons to his white congregation in Rutland, Vermont, and the sermons of the year 1808 by the Rev. Absalom Jones of St. Thomas Church, Philadelphia, and Peter Williams of St. Philip's, New York, pioneer Episcopal rectors who spoke out in daring and influential ways on the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Such things and many others are more than mere items of curiosity: they educate any receptive mind.

Reinforcing these were still rarer items of Africana and foreign Negro interest, the volumes of Juan Latino, the best Latinist of Spain in the reign of Philip V, incumbent of the chair of Poetry at the University of Granada, and author of Poems printed in Granada, 1573, and a book on the Escurial, published 1576; the Latin and Dutch treatises of Jacobus Eliza Capitein, a native of West Coast Africa and graduate of the University of Leyden; Gustavus Vassa's celebrated autobiography that supplied so much of the evidence in 1796 for Granville Sharpe's attack on slavery in the British colonies, Julien Raymond's Paris exposé of the disabilities of the free people of color in the then (1791) French colony of Hayti, and Baron de Vastey's *Cry of the Fatherland,* the famous polemic by the secretary of Christophe that precipitated the Haytian struggle for independence. The cumulative effect of such evidences of scholarship and moral prowess is too weighty to be dismissed as exceptional.

But weightier surely than any evidence of individual tal-

ent and scholarship could ever be, is the evidence of important collaboration and significant pioneer initiative in social service and reform, in the efforts toward race emancipation, colonization, and race betterment. From neglected and rust-spotted pages comes testimony to the black men and women who stood shoulder to shoulder in courage and zeal, and often on a parity of intelligence and talent, with their notable white benefactors. There was the already cited work of Vassa that aided so materially the efforts of Granville Sharpe, the record of Paul Cuffee, the Negro colonization pioneer, associated so importantly with the establishment of Sierra Leone as a British colony for the occupancy of free people of color in West Africa; the dramatic and history-making exposé of John Baptist Phillips, African graduate of Edinburgh, who compelled, through Lord Bathhurst, in 1824, the enforcement of the articles of capitulation guaranteeing freedom to the blacks of Trinidad. There is the record of the pioneer colonization project of Rev. Daniel Coker in conducting a voyage of ninety expatriates to West Africa in 1820, of the missionary efforts of Samuel Crowther in Sierra Leone, first Anglican bishop of his diocese, and that of the work of John Russwurm, a leader in the work and foundation of the American Colonization Society.

When we consider the facts, certain chapters of American history will have to be reopened. Just as black men were influential factors in the campaign against the slave trade, so they were among the earliest instigators of the abolition movement. Indeed, there was a dangerous calm between the agitation for the suppression of the slave trade and the beginning of the campaign for emancipation. During that interval colored men were very influential in arousing the attention of public men who in turn aroused the conscience of the country. Continuously between 1808 and 1845, men like Prince Saunders, Peter Williams, Absalom Jones, Nathaniel Paul, and Bishops Varick and Richard Allen, the founders of the two wings of African Methodism, spoke

out with force and initiative and men like Denmark Vesey (1822), David Walker (1828), and Nat Turner (1831) advocated and organized schemes for direct action. This culminated in the generally ignored but important conventions of Free People of Color in New York, Philadelphia, and other centers, whose platforms and efforts are to the Negro of as great significance as the nationally cherished memories of Faneuil and Independence Halls. Then with Abolition comes the better-documented and more recognized collaboration of Samuel R. Ward, William Wells Brown, Henry Highland Garnett, Martin Delaney, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass, with their great colleagues, Tappan, Phillips, Sumner, Mott, Stowe and Garrison.

But even this latter group who came within the limelight of national and international notice, and thus into open comparison with the best minds of their generation, the public too often regards as a group of inspired illiterates, eloquent echoes of their abolitionist sponsors. For a true estimate of their ability and scholarship, however, one must go with the antiquarian to the files of the *Anglo-African Magazine,* where page by page comparisons may be made. Their writings show Douglass, McCune Smith, Wells Brown, Delaney, Wilmot Blyden, and Alexander Crummell to have been as scholarly and versatile as any of the noted publicists with whom they were associated. All of them labored internationally in the cause of their fellows; to Scotland, England, France, Germany, and Africa, they carried their brilliant offensive of debate and propaganda, and with this came instance upon instance of signal foreign recognition, from academic, scientific, public and official sources. Delaney's *Principia of Ethnology* won public reception from learned societies, Penington's discourses an honorary doctorate from Heidelberg, Wells Brown's three-year mission the entrée to the salons of London and Paris, and Douglass' tours, receptions second only to Henry Ward Beecher's.

After this great era of public interest and discussion, it was Alexander Crummell, who, with the reaction already setting in, first organized Negro brains defensively through the founding of the American Negro Academy in 1874 at Washington. A New York boy whose zeal for education had suffered a rude shock when refused admission to the Episcopal Seminary by Bishop Onderdonk, he had been befriended by John Jay and sent to Cambridge University, England, for his education and ordination. On his return, he was beset with the idea of promoting race scholarship, and the Academy was the final result. It has continued ever since to be one of the bulwarks of our intellectual life, though unfortunately its members have had to spend too much of their energy and effort answering detractors and disproving popular fallacies. Only gradually have the men of this group been able to work toward pure scholarship. Taking a slightly different start, the Negro Society for Historical Research was later organized in New York, and has succeeded in stimulating the collection from all parts of the world of books and documents dealing with the Negro. It has also brought together for the first time co-operatively in a single society African, West Indian, and Afro-American scholars. Direct offshoots of this same effort are the extensive private collections of Henry P. Slaughter of Washington, the Rev. Charles D. Martin of Harlem, of Arthur Schomburg of Brooklyn, and of the late John E. Bruce, who was the enthusiastic and far-seeing pioneer of this movement. Finally, and more recently, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History has extended these efforts into a scientific research project of great achievement and promise. Under the direction of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, it has continuously maintained, for nine years, the publication of the learned quarterly, *The Journal of Negro History,* and with the assistance and recognition of two large educational foundations has maintained research and published valuable monographs in Negro history. Almost keeping pace with the work of scholarship has been

the effort to popularize the results, and to place before Negro youth in the schools the true story of race vicissitude, struggle and accomplishment. So that quite largely now the ambition of Negro youth can be nourished on its own milk.

Such work is a far cry from the puerile controversy and petty braggadocio with which the effort for race history first started. But a general, as well as a racial, lesson has been learned. We seem lately to have come at last to realize what the truly scientific attitude requires, and to see that the race issue has been a plague on both our historical houses, and that history cannot be properly written with either bias or counterbias. The blatant Caucasian racialist with his theories and assumptions of race superiority and dominance has in turn bred his Ethiopian counterpart—the rash and rabid amateur who has glibly tried to prove half of the world's geniuses to have been Negroes and to trace the pedigree of nineteenth-century Americans from the Queen of Sheba. But fortunately to-day there is on both sides of a really common cause less of the sand of controversy and more of the dust of digging.

Of course, a racial motive remains—legitimately compatible with scientific method and aim. The work our race students now regard as important, they undertake very naturally to overcome in part certain handicaps of disparagement and omission too well known to particularize. But they do so not merely that we may not wrongfully be deprived of the spiritual nourishment of our cultural past, but also that the full story of human collaboration and interdependence may be told and realized. Especially is this likely to be the effect of the latest and most fascinating of all of the attempts to open up the closed Negro past, namely, the important study of African cultural origins and sources. The bigotry of civilization, which is the taproot of intellectual prejudice, begins far back and must be corrected at its source. Fundamentally, it has come about from that depreciation of Africa which has sprung up from igno-

rance of her true rôle and position in human history and the early development of culture. The Negro has been a man without a history because he has been considered a man without a worthy culture. But a new notion of the cultural attainment and potentialities of the African stocks has recently come about, partly through the corrective influence of the more scientific study of African institutions and early cultural history, partly through growing appreciation of the skill and beauty, and in many cases, the historical priority of the African native crafts, and finally, through the signal recognition which first in France and Germany but now very generally, the astonishing art of the African sculptures has received. Into these fascinating new vistas, with limited horizons lifting in all directions, the mind of the Negro has leapt forward faster than the slow clearings of scholarship will yet safely permit. But there is no doubt that here is a field full of the most intriguing and inspiring possibilities. Already the Negro sees himself against a reclaimed background, in a perspective that will give pride and self-respect ample scope, and make history yield for him the same values that the treasured past of any people affords.

ESSAYS

Sociological

THE NEGRO MIGRATION

By CHARLES S. JOHNSON

LIKE most serious issues involving the Negro population, that of the migration has gathered around it various poles of argument which tend to express the rituals of contending groups quite as much as the motivating background of the movement. Given the group, and the causes of the migration can be anticipated; given the interests, and the "remedies" can be guessed without difficulty and frequently without study. It is largely a matter of formula. This is, of course, all very helpful after a fashion. From the point of view of plantation owners, the northward movement of Negroes is bad and caused by labor agents. Laws should be passed to discourage their activities. From the point of view of learned agricultural bodies in the South, it is a question of high wages in the industrial centers, and Negroes should be warned of correspondingly high prices and cold weather in the North. It is seen by some Negroes as a silent strike against the intolerable social abuses perpetrated upon them by the South—lynchings, "Jim-Crow" cars, peonage, deprivation of civil rights, bad schools, and the whole disagreeable list. It is seen by others as the result of the boll-weevil, slackened immigration, and an uncertain credit system. The list is interminable.

"Causes" of the migration for most of us now are rather worn stereotypes, and discussion has come to be very largely a matter of oratory and dilation. The danger of this is that an unbalanced perspective is likely to blind us to many elemental dangers which now seem to be running their course unheeded and unchecked. We may just assume at the outset, that all of the causes alleged have some basis in

fact. This discussion will not pretend to any great omniscience on this subject, but rather attempt in a speculative way and without dogmatism to direct thinking toward several sets of facts which may be followed further if they prove sufficiently interesting.

There is an angle of the migration of Negroes from the South which is distinctly racial in significance—by this I mean a situation which affects the Negro population and none other, and because it is the Negro population. There is another, and in my judgment, a more serious angle which, if racial at all, is only indirectly so—affecting whites and Negroes indiscriminately, bearing heavily upon Negroes because they happen to be nearest the bottom though not primarily because of any peculiar biological imperative. Under the latter circumstances we would expect the same things to be happening to whites where they are found in the same economic status of Negroes; we would expect the forces back of the movement to be sweeping along before it with blind indifference to all who lie in its path. There may be something to this after all that can explain many strange and seemingly inconsistent facts.

If there is at all a main thesis to this discussion it is, first that the migration is a perfectly natural occurrence to which the economic system of this country has been contributing; that it is a necessary blood-letting for a condition which in its actual working and results shows many of the symptoms of over-population; that whites and Negroes are being affected by it alike though not in the matter of ultimate results; that conscious purpose frequently plays a relatively small part in the movement, and that bound up with the problems out of which this movement is growing, are other questions, particularly health, which in the main are being neglected because of our pronounced slant in other directions.

A hundred years ago Malthus made an observation which, although it failed to take into account the many recent developments that render it inapplicable in the large,

had certain features which seem to stand. The population tends to grow as fast as its means of subsistence permits. When the point is reached at which more people are being born or there are more people than can be sustained by the returns from the soil, something must happen to adjust the balance. The pouring in of European immigration affords a present-day example of this pressure against the actual means of earning a living. The fourteen million foreign-born in this country are very largely excess population, seeking a country that will yield for them a sufficient subsistence.

Before going further, I want to explain what I mean by over-population and the symptoms of this in the Negro belt in the South. The life of the South is agricultural. The crop, so far as the Negro population goes, is cotton. Sixty per cent of the world's supply is grown here. The position of world leadership is cherished by this section and made possible largely by the plantation system.

This system is, of course, a product of the régime of slavery and is ill-adapted to free labor. Because it is a fixed system and strongly opposed to change, a difficult situation is created. I refer to symptoms of over-population because the condition is, in a large sense, artificial. But the results following it are as real as though the roots of the difficulty were permanent and unchangeable. By referring to over-population, there is no implication that there is not enough land in the South for the people living there, but that there has been an abnormal congestion of the Negro population on an area insufficient to support them. Whether this is due to the plantation system which would ruin the South's preeminence in cotton, or to backward farming methods, or to an inadequate distribution of the land, or to the failure merely to reclaim lands, is not so important as the results that have followed the actual distribution of the population.

Of the 10,463,131 Negroes in the United States, nearly four-fifths of them live in the South. Of the four-fifths ap-

proximately half live in the cotton belt from which the migration has been most pronounced. Eighty per cent of the cotton is produced by Negro labor. Negroes as slaves were placed in the largest numbers in the cotton states. Here the large plantations were established and slaves were bred. The solid spread of land facilitated the management of large plantations. Emancipation left them in these fertile areas where their adaptability for cotton growing and familiarity with the plantation system gave them an advantage in the competition with the poorer white element. The population of a majority of the counties, particularly in the rich delta regions of Mississippi and in the cotton sections of other states, has been predominantly Negro, and the tendency has been in the past toward an even heavier concentration. The percentage of counties with over 75 per cent Negroes increased from 21.9 in 1880 to 26.6 in 1910. In Mississippi in 1910 (before the first pronounced northward movement) 39.2 per cent of the Negro population lived in counties 75 per cent or more Negro. There are sixty counties in Georgia with a majority of Negro population. Cotton is an uneconomical crop. Its nurture requires seven times as many hands as any ordinary crop and only for certain periods of the year. It is one crop which has yielded very slowly to labor-saving devices and can be profitably grown only with cheap and abundant labor. The foremost cotton-producing countries, which include India, China, and Africa, depend upon masses of cheap labor for its development.

But there have been two significant developments in this situation. Although there was for three decades a steady increase in the number of Negro counties, the proportion of Negro tenants has been increasing, while the percentage of owners has shown a corresponding decrease. The belief that it is easy for Negroes to buy land is largely a myth. It was so characterized by Carl Schurz. It is possible to buy land, but it is of a type that is either worthless or requires a long period of development, and only wealthy land-

owners, able to live on small profits for a while, can give worn-out lands the required rest or wait for them to be developed. There has also been a feeling against agents selling land to Negroes because it was thought they would demoralize the labor system. The same feeling applies frequently to immigrants. The result is that in the South, as a whole, three of every four Negro farmers are tenants and in the densest Negro areas there is the smallest land ownership. These figures, incidentally, have erroneously given rise to the belief that these Negroes are shiftless.

In the second place, in spite of the population increase and the necessity for getting an even greater return from the soil, the actual productivity of the soil has decreased. I may, perhaps, lead off into an observation made by Professor Cox in his valuable treatise on population. A given area of soil can be made to yield greater production only in proportion to the intensive cultivation it gets and the added machinery and materials for working it. This applies whether the area is one or a thousand acres. On the other hand, it requires no more effort for 250,000 couples to produce a million babies than for one couple to produce four. We are familiar with this phenomenon: the Negro death rate during the period of slavery was about the same as that of the white. Beginning with their independence, this death rate increased steadily up to about ten years ago in spite of the increase in education and some measure of health training. The Negro population has increased at a rate nearly normal. During the last decade we were surprised and shocked to learn that the rate of increase had fallen off about 50 per cent. Making allowances for certain errors in enumeration, there is still room for some concern on these figures. This does not mean that fewer children are being born in the congested district of the South, but that actually more of them are dying.

Although the registration area covers the more advanced states, leaving unknown the tremendous mortality of these states most important in this study, out of every hundred

thousand Negro male children born alive and every hundred thousand white male children born alive, 9,609 more Negro boys die before they reach the age of one year than white boys, and 8,281 more girls.

These figures apply to the period of the beginning of the migration from the South.

This fact is largely concealed because the registration area does not cover the important Negro states. A few communities have made actual rural surveys which might well, in the absence of any other data, serve as indices to the whole. In Travis County, Texas, for example (1916), Negro tenants had just about twice as many infant deaths as the whites, and as evidence that living standards played some considerable part, there was a difference of about 21 points between white tenants and white owners, in favor of the latter.

In this area there are more and earlier marriages and the proportion of children born is larger than in any other section of the country. In the earliest marriageable age period, 15 to 19, among rural Negro men 2.4 per cent have been married as compared with 1.3 per cent for white men; 19.2 per cent for Negro women as compared with 13.8 per cent for white women. But this is balanced by a tremendous infant mortality rate. *The studies of the Children's Bureau indicate that the greatest number of infant deaths occurs in families in which the father's wage is lowest; in families in which the mother goes out to work during the period before the baby comes and while the baby is still of nursing age.* Something like 60 per cent of the Negro women on farms work on the farms. My suggestion is that it is impossible to sustain this population after it reaches a certain point on the returns from the soil and the only alternative is a high death rate or what would tend to adjust the balance—migration. Even more tangible evidences of this pressure might be stated: in the state of Georgia, a survey made in 1913 developed that the average annual cash income of the Negro rural family was $290. The average size of the

rural southern Negro family is 4.3. The truck farmer is able to reduce his cash expenditures by raising his own food and it is estimated that about 60 per cent of his food is thus obtained. Cotton growers cannot eat their product and must buy it. Another survey recently made by one of the southern universities of the difference between cost and credit prices developed the very startling fact that this difference averages 70 per cent. The South still imports from the North and West practically all of its bread stuffs and meats. A pertinent recommendation to the farmers of the South by a prominent agricultural expert was that they raise more cows and fewer dogs. The shortage in milk supply for children has been an exceptionally dangerous item and without doubt has registered in serious infant mortality. A striking example of the difference which population makes is evident in comparison of Iowa, an agricultural state, with Alabama, also agricultural. The average Alabama farm has 38 acres, using but 1.5 work animals and depending upon cheap labor. The average Iowa farmer has 138 acres and an average of 8 work animals—the gross income of Iowa farmers is five times that of Alabama farmers. Or to use another example, we know that within the past 20 years the rural population has been increasing very slowly and has delivered up millions to the city—whereas the population increased but 10 per cent, the output, however, has increased 40 per cent, and with this the value of products has risen from 4 billion in 1897 to 23 billion in 1919. Added to the disproportionate relation between this population growth and the yield of the soil, there has been the boll-weevil which has laid waste over 400,000 acres; floods and financial depression—for it is a strange fact that the more cotton produced even after the hazards of production are passed, the lower will be the price and as follows, the lower the converted yield of the soil to the tenants.

Now the most natural result has followed this situation. Long before industries beckoned, there was profound rest-

lessness in the South. This shifting and movement has taken three distinct directions and has not been confined to Negroes. The first has been urbanization; the second, the quest for more productive lands; and third, the movement to the industrial centers where, by the way, the law of diminishing returns is not so fatally oppressive.

During the 30-year period, 1890-1920, there was an increase in the rural population of 896,124 Negroes as compared with 2,078,331 for cities. The urban increase has been just about 100 per cent as rapid as the rural. In 1890, 19.8 per cent of the Negro population lived in cities; in 1920, this proportion grew to about 40 per cent. In the Southern States, between 1890 and 1900, the rural population increased 13.6 per cent, and between 1910 and 1920, it actually decreased 3.3 per cent. The Negro population increase in southern cities, considered as a whole, has been greater than the increase in the North, considered as a whole, despite the half-million added during the last decade. Here, of course, is the economic factor at work, hand in hand, with greater mobility, increased transportation, restlessness, and the monotony and uncertainty of agricultural life against the allurements of the city.

The greatest inter-state movements of southern Negroes have been further South and West. In 1910, 52.3 per cent of the migration from Southern States was to the area west of the Mississippi; while in 1920, after the tremendous migration to the North, 42.9 per cent were living in the Southwestern States as compared with 42.2 per cent living in the North and West. For 130 years the center of the Negro population moved steadily some 478 miles toward the southwest—from Dinwiddie County, Virginia, to northern Alabama.

This shifting is further evident in the instability of Negro population in southern counties. Between 1900 and 1910, for example, 33.5 per cent of the counties increased rapidly, 31.1 increased at a rate above the average, while only 3.4 per cent showed an actual decrease, and 9.8 per

cent an average increase equivalent to the total increase of the section. In 1879 there was a migration, similar to the one which we now experience, to Kansas. This followed a depression in 1878. Some 60,000 Negroes left. In 1888-1889 there was a similar movement to Arkansas, which carried 35,000 Negroes. Arkansas, for example, gained between 1900 and 1910, 105,516 Negroes, the largest net gain of any state North or South; Oklahoma gained 85,062; and Texas, 19,821; while all the eastern, southern, and central states suffered a loss. The counties of most rapid increase in the South between 1910 and 1920 were those south of the region of maximum Negro population density in 1910.

Oppression plays its part, a strong one, but here also these factors must be considered: (a) the white populations have been showing in general outline the same trend of mobility as the Negroes and their rate of mobility was 20 per cent as compared with 16 per cent for the Negroes.

Had persecution been the dominant and original stimulus, the direction of Negroes during the 60 years following emancipation would have been north instead of further south. On the other hand, conditions in the South, if anything, have improved with its 800 inter-racial organizations, and have suffered a slight change for the worse in the North with its million or more Ku Klux Klan organizations.

As a working test of the persecution theory as the dominant motive, a rough correlation was made between counties of the South in which lynchings had occurred during the 30-year period, 1888-1918, and the migration from and to these counties.

Of ten Georgia counties, in which five or more lynchings occurred, the Negro population increased in five. Of the other five in which the Negro population decreased, there was a corresponding decrease in the white population in three, and an increase in the other two considerably less than the average. To use one example: in Montgomery County, in which five lynchings occurred the Negro population decreased from 7,310 to 4,348 and the white popula-

tion from 12,328 to 4,768. If decrease is a measure of persecution, the whites, it seems, are the greater victims.

In Jasper County, Ga., there were nine lynchings, the largest number for any county of the state in thirty years. The Negro population actually increased in this county between 1890 to 1920, while the white population during 1900 and 1910 actually decreased.

Or to take the State of Texas: of the six counties with five or more lynchings, the Negro population increased in four and decreased in two. Of the two in which there was a Negro decrease, there was a corresponding but more serious decrease in the white population. In Waller County, the Negro population decreased from 6,712 in 1910 to 4,967 in 1920; the white population decreased from 6,375 in 1900 to 5,426 in 1910 and to 4,082 in 1920. In Harrison County, with the largest number of lynchings (16) the Negro population showed a similar increase from 15,544 to 15,639.

In the State of Alabama, Jefferson County, with 10 lynchings, increased from 90,617 in 1910 to 130,211 in 1920—the largest recorded increase in any county; Dallas County, with the largest number of lynchings (19) lost only 1,246 Negroes, while Sumter, with no lynchings at all, lost 3,491.

Strong as is the economic urge on the southern end, there are other powerful factors at work in the North. We regarded ourselves as normal when industrial production absorbed 1,200,000 immigrants each year. Since 1914, these incoming hordes have been checked. Roughly where we might have had about nine and one-half million potential workers, we had actually only about three million, something like one-third. The three per cent quota law contemplated the entrance of about 360,000 persons annually or forty-five per cent of the usual. When emigration is deducted and actual man power considered, the per cent is reduced to about eleven. It has been further reduced to two per cent. Again, the recent Nordic blood renaissance and prejudice against south Europeans, the rough manual laborers, has tightened the bars even more against the tradi-

tional northern competitors of Negroes letting in the largest numbers, north Europeans, who spurn manual occupations. Ordinary losses by death, retirement and advancement require annually, it is estimated, about 214,000 laborers. The population increases about 1,400,000 annually or about 14 per 1,000. To keep pace with the growth there are needed about 368,000 new laborers annually. In the first migration there was a net increase in the northern Negro population of 340,260. These crowded into cities. Wages are from 100 to 250 per cent higher and although living costs in many instances are correspondingly high, there is in the thrill of earning and spending, in increased standards, greater mobility, freedom, and excitement, the emotional satisfaction required by the majority of the population, white or colored.

It will be necessary for brevity to group the other causes of the migration. These are in general as follows:

1. Better wages
2. Better treatment
3. Better cultural advantages, schools, stimulating contacts, wholesome diversion, etc.
4. Mass psychology and the stimulus of moving hysteria
5. Desire to travel
6. Direct importation.

All of these, more or less, have some influence on each migrant and in but few instances can there be found one cause acting alone. Most commonly, one motive is dominant with one or more of the others added to give complete stimulus to action.

In 1918 I examined about 4,000 letters written by Negroes from all parts of the South to northern persons and agencies expressing a desire to move. Of these, seventy-one per cent had as their dominant motive economic improvement. This meant more wages, more regular wages, shorter hours, opportunity for advancement, more agreeable work. Apparently this ambition has been in a measure accomplished, for there are about 300,000 fewer Negro women working

than there were ten years ago, indicating a more secure foundation for the Negro family and home. The more prosperous the Negro family usually, the smaller the proportion of women working.

The question of better treatment has many interesting angles. So long as people know no better they can adjust themselves, but discontent comes by comparison. Travel affords comparison and the initial movement of Negroes, probably for economic motives, carried them to their first contacts. Reading is a substitute for actual travel. The literacy of Negroes during the whole period in question increased from ten to seventy per cent. The circulation of the *Chicago Defender,* for example, with its special effort to stimulate the movement by representing a picturesque and completely agreeable North, unthinkable in dreams of any place this side of heaven, increased its circulation from about 10,000 to 93,000 in the South.

The coming of good roads, cheap automobiles, telephones, all have added to the mobility and restlessness of the farm-reared southern Negroes. There has been doubtless a net improvement in treatment, but at the same time the emigration northward of southern whites, and the effects of the sudden congregation of large numbers of Negroes in a few northern cities has without doubt increased the original tension.

Cultural advantages have been improved in largest proportions. Practically all the northern Negro children of early age are in school where in the South there were only about thirty-five per cent.

The psychological stimulus of a mass movement has always been underestimated. When a man moves, he does not always have definite reasons. Usually the reasons he gives are a rationalization of his behavior. When the last migration was at its height, thousands of Negroes were simply caught up in the contagion, and from their curiosity, desire for adventure, loneliness, excitement, picked up their few belongings and left.

No such hysteria is noted in the present migration. Actually, it seems, more Negroes are leaving but the movement is less demonstrative. The first nucleus in the North in their letters home have done much to advertise the North to their less fortunate relations and friends.

The present migration began in the late summer of 1922 just following a period of widespread depression and continued steadily through the winter, spurting up fresh in the spring of 1923. Since September 1, 1922, 378,700 are known to have moved North. The Department of Labor has just released some interesting figures on their distribution and assimilation. In 273 firms they found 60,421 Negro workers; 14,951 were doing skilled work and 45,470 unskilled work, and during the past year 18,050 Negroes have been added to payrolls, of which 4,157 were skilled. The increase in skilled Negroes was thirty-eight and five-tenths per cent and of unskilled, forty-four per cent. Some states show an increase in skilled Negroes as high as 186.8 per cent.

The Department of Research and Investigations of the National Urban League has secured some figures on the movement since January 1, 1923. This inquiry confines itself to 8 large northern cities. To these approximately 113,600 Negroes have come.

I have attempted to cover the outstanding factors in the migration of Negroes, giving perhaps an unbalanced emphasis upon those phases not frequently touched. If one is permitted to speculate, these thoughts are offered:

The breaking up of the southern black belt will release the South from its fear of numerical domination by Negroes and proportionately weaken the wall of opinion behind the summary proscriptions of Negroes against the exercise of civil rights, but the spread of Negroes and southern whites is increasing antagonistic sentiment in northern communities.

The breaking up of the black belt will break up the plantation system which is an anachronism—an institution belonging to the era of slavery and ill-adapted to free labor.

Such destruction should benefit both white and Negro tenants by making available the large fertile tracts of land for more intensive individual cultivation as small farms.

The rate of increase in the Negro population in 1930 will probably show a striking increase, for the relief of over-population in spots will reduce the excessive death rate and, at the same time, present numbers in cities where they are more exposed to health education and regulation.

The per cent of skilled Negro workers will in all probability increase because there are not sufficient white immigrant recruits to replace the annual loss from promotion, retirement and death of skilled white workers, and Negroes are now experiencing their longest period of employment in industrial occupations, for the first time having sufficient background to acquire skill.

The problems in the North usually grow out of housing insufficiency. This is a result of an influx which proceeds more rapidly than a community can build houses. Following this are rent exploitations and the well-known question of over-crowding. For it is a strange fact that in many cities of the North the Negro population, although through no fault of their own, tend to confine themselves to fewer wards and smaller areas while their proportions increase within these smaller areas.

There is hope of eventually striking a balance on the housing deadlock, however, through the tendency of industries to desert the cities. These will carry workers with them. It will be observed that the clothing industry is leaving New York, great industries like the International Harvester Company, the General Electric, and others are giving less and less thought to any one particular city.

It is observed that with few exceptions, the increased proportion of Negroes in the total population of cities of the North tends to increase adverse sentiment and to a large extent decreases this sentiment in the South.

The migration since 1915 has enfranchised perhaps a quarter of a million citizens. This is an item to be reckoned

with. Chicago has finally achieved a congressional district in which Negroes outnumber whites four to one. It has also just recently elected a Negro State Senator and a Negro Municipal Judge.

We may expect a high mortality for a period for although more people are being exposed to infinitely improved health instruction the movement of excessively large proportions of adults whose chances of life are smaller, will increase the Negro mortality rate. For example, the largest age group among Negroes in Illinois is that of thirty-five to thirty-nine. In this matter of health another factor, small in itself but important, might be pointed out. An excessively large number of adults needing hospital care growing out of long standing neglect in the South, is noted in some cities of the North. This factor is frequently responsible for family desertions. Considered, however, over a longer period of time, life in northern cities has actually improved the health of Negroes.

The cultural contacts to which the migrants are daily exposed when they do not live in transplanted southern colonies has aided the living standards of many new comers by providing superior patterns.

The realignment of relations with whites will doubtless be accompanied at first with conflicts more or less severe, as for example, in the seven or eight riots which developed around the first sudden contacts of South and North, but the ultimate relations, there is warrant for believing, will be both more permanent and more mutually tolerable.

THE NEGRO AND THE NEW ECONOMIC LIFE

By ABRAM L. HARRIS

I

THE predominant feature in the history of western civilization is its technological development. This growth in mechanical technique has been caused by a persistent adaptation and proliferation of machines for the production of goods and a rapid acceleration in the volume of saved wealth. It has been accompanied by the multiplication and diversification of human wants resulting in the expansion of markets, the specialization of economic function, and to a rather clear cut differentiation between classes. All this transformation is usually summed up as the "evolution of modern capitalism."[1]

Prior to the coming of capitalism, land constituted the basis of economic power and social prestige. With the rise of commerce and industry, the economic arrangements of the Middle-Ages declined, and capital began to contest the position which land had so long pre-empted. For approximately two centuries a conflict ensued between the owners of capital and the owners of land. In the realm of moral and philosophic concepts, it was a combat in which business individualism, private enterprise and *laissez-faire* were pitted against aristocratic heredity, paternalistic monarchy and state interference with commerce and industry. The

[1] Capitalism may be defined as "the organization of business upon a large scale by an employer or company of employers possessing an accumulated stock of wealth wherewith to acquire raw materials and tools, and hire laborers, so as to produce an increased quantity of wealth which shall constitute profit." J. H. Hobson, *Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, page 1.

owners of capital emerged triumphant; democracy and constitutionalism rode rough shod over noble birth and aristocracy. So, now, for the first time in history, society was looked upon—especially by the political economists who were beginning to flourish in social esteem—as comprising rather well defined classes: the landed aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, or middle-class industrialists, and the proletariat, or working-class.

Like England and the continental countries of Europe, America experienced a bourgeois revolution. It did not at first proceed from the increased rôle that capital and machinery were coming to play in American domestic affairs, nor from any contest between the owners of capital and the owners of land. Such a contest did not occur upon American soil until well toward the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This first revolt was directed against the economic paternalism of an empire of which the American colonists were considered a part. And while the Declaration of Independence was conceived in the then nascent spirit of *natural law, natural liberty* and economic individualism, it did not establish beyond parliamentary debate, the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie in the economic and political life of the United States. But at the close of the War for Independence when returning tranquillity permitted a political stock-taking, a rather conflicting situation was found to exist; one for which neither the economic evolution of England nor that of the continental countries offered analogy.

About a century and a half before the War for Independence, England in keeping with her mercantile policy of maintaining the colonies as a source of raw materials for her manufactures had encouraged trafficking in African Negroes whose enslavement supplied the colonial tobacco planters and, later, the Cotton Kingdom with necessary cheap and tractable labor. Consequently, at the founding of the Union, there were to be found in the Northern States: merchants, shop-keepers and budding manufactur-

ers, who constituted the American bourgeoisie, a slowly emerging wage-earning class, or proletariat, and an insignificantly few enslaved Negro domestics. The stratification was different in the Southern States. Here were to be found the proprietors of large landed areas, a less powerful group of small free-holders, an enslaved black laboring class, and a small number of white artisans.

Although the northern middle-classes, aided by the proletariat, had combined with the southern slave-owning planters against Great Britain, it was evident even before the conflict had begun that the economic presuppositions of the two sections, while not clearly defined, were in fundamental opposition. Time slowly wrought the predestined transformation. The North became more and more industrialized, and capital began to play an increasing rôle in "the settled use and wont" of its economic life. In the South the cotton culture and slave labor became more firmly implanted. And southern planters and northern merchants and manufacturers, increasingly conscious of conflicting interests, watched each other lest one should violate the other's political prerogative. Later these dominant classes became partisans to a controversy which, under the guise of the doctrine of states rights, was taken into the arena of parliamentary debate. But the avalanche of bolts thundered by the northern bourgeoisie that "no nation can exist half-slave and half-free," made not the slightest impression upon the southern planters' belief that slaves were private property; that property-rights are sacrosanct; and that involuntary or forced disposal of property instanced by the Federal Government was confiscation, and therefore contravened the constitution. Each combatant was so determined that its self-interest should become the national will that it was soon obvious that these differences could not be conciliated through the process of tongue-lashing. It was necessary to resort to blood and iron to settle for once and all time, whether capital and the social habits which it engenders, or the plantation and the slave

power, should guide the destiny of the New World empire. When the fatal blood-letting had rid the political system of its most insidious toxins, the Emancipation Proclamation was promulgated as a war measure by President Abraham Lincoln. Despite the author's alleged willingness[2] to have the Supreme Court declare it unconstitutional, should the seceding states return to the Union, this document foreshadowed the complete victory of the capitalistic economy. It was the "Savior of the Union's" oration at Gettysburg, however, that announced without equivocation the preëminence that capital and the bourgeoisie had won in this nation's life.

II

In the foregoing observations, no especially disruptive influence has been assigned to the Negro race, *per se,* or to the campaigns waged with perfervid zeal by abolitionists in behalf of the Negro. Little, perhaps, did the Negro, or for that matter the abolitionists, realize that abolitionism was the emotional accompaniment of economic changes that were disturbing the old order. As a matter of historic fact an earlier abolitionist movement had flowered in the South before the Cotton Kingdom rose. It was stifled because changing economic conditions left it without *raison d'être.* This should not eclipse the importance of the abolitionist as a moral force, since simon-pure economic factors cannot work social transformation unless reinforced by intellectual and moral enthusiasm. Moreover, the abolitionists and their spiritual descendants were the medium through which the philanthropy of northern capitalists and the influence of a decaying puritan morality and religion filtered down to the Negro population. Their interest in the education and social uplift of the Negro made them appear to the Negro to be of inestimable power and worth in the scheme of things. He reciprocated benefactions by

[2] *Vide* History of Working and Burgher Classes, Translator's Preface, page xiii. M. Adolphe de Cassognac.

assuming a moral debt which was to be paid in eternal allegiance to Republican party politicians.

III

The slave régime furnished the basis for the racial distinctions which it projected and crystallized into a social psychology, which in turn became the sentimental bulwark of the slave power and its legacy upon dissolution. In order to hold the system intact, the exploitation of labor as justified on the ground that the Negro was inherently unfitted for independent participation in western culture. Even to the poor white worker whose status was only theoretically superior to that of the slave, the Negro was accursed of God, and "to labor was to work like a nigger." On the other hand, the social superiority of the master-class exerted a subtle influence on the Negro slave. Conscious of his own social and economic debasement and contemptuous of the poor white man's economic infirmity, he desired to be like the old masters. The complexity of these attitudes made it impossible for the lower white and black classes to divest themselves of mutual animosity.

When freedom came, the Negro, who, in culture and refinement, more nearly approximated the white man, comprised a sort of natural aristocracy which furnished the race with leaders. Under the household economy of the slave régime these leaders had been the house-servants and artisans. Their proximity to the dominant class of whites, and sometimes blood-relationship, predisposed them to an affectation of aristocratic graces, traditions, and manners. But their social philosophy was of northern origin.

This early Negro leadership was mainly political in its purpose and outlook. While the more astute Negro politicians may have perceived some of the economic factors in the race-problem, only ephemeral contact was established with the labor movement of the 60's and 70's, when competition provoked certain white unions to take the initia-

tive in organizing Negro workers. Of course, many of the unions, like the typographical that was malicious in its discriminations against Negro printers, intensified the Negro worker's skepticism of white labor, particularly when organized. But the chief element that perpetuated discord and profited by it was the Negro politicians who were Negro labor's spokesmen during this period. These politicians were aligned with the Republican Party. When the white workers projected an independent labor party, the Negro Republicans naturally exclaimed that their party was the fountain of all social reform. The Negro masses acquiesced in the political faith of their leaders; and their social experience could not lead to any appreciation of labor legislation such as was proposed by their white contemporaries. Not that the Negro worker disapproved class-legislation. The fact was that he did approve class-legislation when it was designed to ameliorate specific racial handicaps.

On the economic side, the chief undertaking directly after emancipation was the incorporation of the Freedmen's Savings Bank by the Federal Government. This too was tainted with Republican politics. It was not conceived by Negroes as a step in the race's economic elevation. It was organized for Negroes by their political guardians. Although the bank was a hot-bed of corruption and exploitation, it served to bring the Negro closer to the "habits of thought" that prevailed in the capitalistic economy. Along with this indoctrination in the cultus of savings and private enterprise, went habituation to the ideology of the white middle-classes. And in later years the racial philosophy advanced by Booker T. Washington, and which taught *industrial efficiency* to the Negro masses became also the embodiment of this ideology.[3] But, the Washingtonian philosophy eschewed political alliances—even with

[3] Booker T. Washington is known as the exponent of Industrial Education for the Negro. He also organized the Negro Business League which functions today under the leadership of his successor, Robert Russa Moton.

the political power that was symbolic of the virtues it copied. More paradoxical than this was the fact that business enterprise as a philosophy of racial advancement was made synonymous with the industrial education of the Negro, since both claimed to be the means of Negro economic emancipation.

IV

As social ostracism increased, and the Negro's industrial education—such as it was—counted for little in the competitive economy, the philosophy of business enterprise succeeded in establishing its conceptual independence of the old dualism in economic thinking of Negro leaders. It became the means of promoting Negro independence of existing economic arrangements; and now, in our contemporary culture, it bids fair to pre-empt the field of racial-betterment philosophies. The practical validity of Negro business enterprise is claimed to be attested by the surpluses of wealth individual Negroes have accumulated. The adherents to the doctrine do not advocate increasing the number of really middle-class Negroes through an increase of independent Negro farmers, even though sound business enterprise must rest as much upon such a class as upon industrial and fiscal fact. In the surrounding white population, business enterprise rests upon a fairly even distribution of functional classes, cultivation of natural resources and ownership of complex industrial arrangements. In the Negro population functional classes are most unevenly distributed, and of course the Negro has little industrial control and possesses a small share of the nation's natural resources. The Negro upper-class, which is after all a *petit bourgeoisie,* is composed of relatively small business-men, a few well-to-do Negro farmers in the South, doctors, lawyers, dentists, druggists, and school teachers. Here of late a decided growth in industrial wage-earners has increased the number of skilled craftsmen in the Negro pop-

ulation while decreasing its agricultural proletariat. At the bottom of the social ladder are to be found the unskilled laborers, domestic servants, and agricultural wage-earners, who constitute by far the largest functional groups. The professions are already overcrowded in the cities, since the escape from the lot of domestic and the unskilled laborer into the higher commercial and industrial avenues is blocked by racial circumscription. Relief from this top-heaviness among Negro functional classes is promised by those who advocate business enterprise as the plan of racial salvation. And it seems that the grip that this doctrine of wealth, enterprise and individual acquisitiveness has upon the Negro, is a testimonial of his mental attachment to the white upper-classes. What are the Negro's prospects of realizing these ideals in American life? Upon the answer to this question hinges the probability of the Negro's continued social performance in accordance with bourgeois logic, as well as the prospects of a strictly racial business enterprise, the material base without which his middle-class bias must become a useless psychological vestige of social heritage.

V

Let us examine the postulates of business enterprise as a racial philosophy. Its adherents maintain that since the Negro problem is purely economic, the solution is the creation of competitive business enterprise within the Negro group so as to afford employment to Negroes. It is further contended that a state of racial economic sufficiency will be attained only when the Negro consumes less and produces more.

The growing prevalence of the above type of reasoning undoubtedly marks a renaissance of Negro economic learning; but one whose philosophic validity was lost upon the advent of modern capitalism. Before the rise of the *bourgeoisie,* the doctrine that guided the economic policy of nations was mercantilism. It held that a nation's stock of

gold was the best measure of national wealth and power; and that the way to increase national wealth and power was by producing goods that could be exported for money returns and by consuming less of other nations' goods. As modern industrial society gradually developed, the economists saw that interdependence and not self-sufficiency was the basis of economic and social progress. Today, even in that sphere of economic life known as international trade, this hoary fallacy of economic self-sufficiency has lost much of its pristine virtue. The doctrine of *comparative costs* which is but an extension of the principle of division of labor, is of greater importance in international trade than is this notion of the self-contained community. Obviously, in a complex culture based upon specialization and interdependence of classes and individuals, there can be little approximation to individual, racial or national self-sufficiency.

The absence of statistics on the comparative industrial efficiency of racial groups makes it impossible to ascertain the productivity of different races. Such data are not necessary for a refutation of the insinuation that the Negro is a parasitical class in industrial society. What on earth has the Negro been doing these last three hundred years in America, if he has not been producing? To what has his man-power been devoted, if not to the increase of wealth and services? It is a fact, however, that the Negro has rarely owned or controlled the instruments and machines of production, *i.e.,* social capital. Nor have the great entrepreneurs been recruited from the Negro race. The Negro as a freeman arrived very tardily on the scene of capitalistic enterprise and adventure. The greater portion of the Negro population has been wage-earners and chiefly unskilled laborers. This can by no twist of economic logic be construed into meaning that the Negro has been more of a consumer than a producer. And it is futile to point out that after all, consumption is merely a demand for production and *vice versa;* for, what these advocates of

racial business mean by increased productivity is that the Negro should procure some of the wealth-producing factors of the community—which is very different from admonishing him to become more productive. How great are the Negro's possibilities in achieving this goal? If some individuals among the Negroes are to succeed as business undertakers, must their success be a purely racial phenomenon; or can it result from general conditions of the competitive economy? Social attitudes being what they are, will not the identity of Negro enterprise restrict its utility to the Negro group? When pushed to its logical extremity, must not this doctrine of Negro business enterprise reckon with the feasibility of erecting within the already existing national economy, a purely racial one?

Thus far the Negro's largest economic institutions have been banks, insurance, and real estate corporations and secret fraternities. In short his most important economic institutions have been financial. Now, the financial superstructure of modern capitalism has been built up in order to hold together the underlying and somewhat diversified but interstitial parts of industry, commerce, and agriculture. Industry proper is devoted to the production of goods. Investment banks supply fixed capital, and commercial banks and paper-houses supply working capital for transferring the commodities produced. While financial institutions perform a useful function in production and exchange operations of industrial society, their existence is contingent, not only upon savings, but a market for the capital which savings place at their disposal. The existence of Negro finance organizations may be assured by the savings of the masses. But what about the demand for these savings, *i.e.*, the market for capital-disposal? If the funds of Negro finance institutions flow to the general money market, these institutions must ultimately lose their racial significance in the mêlée of competition—which may not be a bad thing—but more of this later. If the available funds do not flow to the general market, they

must be confined to investments within the race. Where is the Negro or group of Negroes who owns or controls interest in factories, mines, or public utilities that have need of fixed or liquid capital? Negro business men do operate funeral and embalming and hair-straightening concerns of not ordinary capitalization. These are not sufficiently numerous or potent to give solidity and flexibility to any large financial superstructure. The advances that Negro finance organizations make must take the form of short-time consumption loans, or when made for a larger period take the form of a mortgage on real property. At all events their assets are of a non-shiftable type. But this does not check the Negro's ambition for multiplying banks and finance corporations.

One argument for the creation of Negro banks is that they enable the Negro to keep his earnings within the race. The chief lamentation of Negro business enterprise is that Negroes carry large deposits with white banks. One Negro banker upon visiting New York saw that a great many Negroes were depositing their savings with the United States Postal Savings Department. This was very distasteful to him. He seemed to have felt that a Negro bank should be organized as depositary for these funds. Perhaps it never dawned on this banker that the United States Government was at that time employing in New York City alone more Negroes than all of the Negro finance institutions combined. Little do these banking promoters realize that they and their institutions rest upon the savings of Negro masses who are employed, not by Negro but by white capitalists.

Another argument for the creation of Negro banks is that they give Negro business men greater credit accommodations. White banks, for example, refuse to extend the same credit terms on a mortgage in real property in a Negro as in a white community. It seems that the policy is not always racial. Very often it is economic. A white business man who seeks a loan on property which he owns

in a Negro neighborhood is likely to receive much better terms from a white bank than a Negro owning the same piece of property. The white borrower's direct or indirect credit-standing in the business community, apart from the security offered, plays an important part in the transaction. Moreover, it is not unlikely that this hypothetical white borrower of superior credit-standing could obtain better accommodations from a Negro creditor than could the average Negro borrower. Aside from the comparative borrowing strength of the Negro and white business-man, what is the character of the security offered, *i.e.*, the real property in the Negro community? Is it good business practice to extend the same credit on it as on property of the same appraised value in a white community? The opinion seems to be that it is not. In certain Negro communities some property is in exceptional physical condition, but the surrounding property has suffered such rapid physical depreciation that the whole section is undesirable for residential purposes. The value of first-class Negro property must for this reason fall below what its normal price would otherwise be. Moreover, once property is let to Negro tenants, its vendibility is restricted and its market value reflects the limitation in demand. One may easily deplore these conditions but not deny that business actuated by the *profit motif* in a competitive society is forced to discriminate against mortgages on property in Negro communities. And the prime position that the real estate mortgage occupies in Negro financial operations gives Negro banking a rather non-flexible and investment character.

To the extent that Negro finance institutions assist black wage-earners to acquire property, they are beneficial, though limited in function. Their serviceability could as a matter of fact be heightened by organization upon a co-operative basis which would permit Negro savers to share in the surpluses. But these organizations are conceived in the spirit of business individualism. They are

not organized for racial service but for private profit. The surpluses must therefore go to the entrepreneurs. And in Negro business enterprise an inordinately high proportion of the gross profit is diverted by the entrepreneur from reinvestment in the business enterprise and appropriated to his personal consumption, which is usually more conspicuously wasteful than that of wealthier and more efficient capitalists in the world of great economic achievement. As a general tendency undue absorption of profits will inevitably weaken the whole fabric of Negro business. It has already led to what a Negro business man called over-expansion, which is not over-expansion in any real economic sense of over-investment. It is rather under-investment; the quest for greater and greater profits in face of the limitations placed upon Negro finance institutions by their absence of industrial foundation and inadequate market for capital, leads the Negro entrepreneurs into promotions of dubious worth. Investments are made in amusement corporations and other perpetual-motion machines that are perpetual only to the extent that they secure perpetual instalments of investment. But why can't Negro finance institutions secure a firm footing in economic life by purchasing the shares of industrial corporations or by organizing new ones?

Before the Negro was emancipated, the great American fortunes were in the making. When he became a freeman, the foundation of the continental railway systems and the later development of mines, factories and fields had been laid. A score of years after his emancipation, huge combinations capitalized in hundreds of millions arose, stifling competition and establishing monopoly in industry. Today some of these vertical and horizontal combinations are capitalized at more than a billion dollars. They have not only established a sort of hegemony in industry, but have set up interlocking directorates and communities of interest in the financial domain. Does anyone acquainted with this economic evolution believe that the Negro, as

such, at this late date, can by some financial wizardry acquire much of the nation's sources of raw material, or obtain control of any of the productive factors?

Of course the shares of large industrial and public utilities are purchasable on the market. Suppose the Negroes in the United States could be prevailed upon to pool their wealth and place it in the hands of Negro enterprises so as to gain control of some of the numerous corporations by mopping up their securities. Any one of a thousand investment bankers could bankrupt the whole Negro race between tickings of the stock exchange tickers. No doubt some sagacious and thrifty Negro individuals, or corporations, may purchase securities of existing, or new, corporations or portions of the issues of foreign and domestic governments. Such operations must of necessity be limited. When conducted on a wide scale, the Negro business is forced to take chances in the general competitive market where small and inexperienced economic endeavor is disadvantaged. Capitalize some racial enterprise at a billion dollars. If it would live it must ultimately compete with white business. This, for the reasons already alluded to, would be its undoing.

The financial prowess of the Jewish capitalists is often cited for Negro emulation. But the existence of a large population of poor Jews who—no more than Negroes, the occasional object of Jewish capitalists' charity—have escaped the wage-earning class merely because of the existence of Jewish financiers, is usually ignored. A more important fact of Jewry is ignored: the financial history of the Jew which dates back to the Middle Ages when the Church's edict against usury gave the Jews monopoly of money-lending.

The logical conclusions from these observations may be summarized:

Negro financial institutions can neither hope to exert any considerable control over national industry requiring

fixed capital nor over purely commercial transactions necessitating working capital.

Social attitudes being what they are, the racial identity of Negro economic institutions will, perforce of these attitudes, confine their services to the Negro race.

The restriction of the dealings of Negro finance institutions to purely racial ventures will shunt them from the general investment market, thus further proscribing their utility.

These institutions may incidentally assist some Negroes to acquire a stake in the economic order and furnish employment to a limited number of educated Negroes; but the masses of Negroes must continue to look to white capitalism for employment.

They are a sort of illogically necessary appurtenance in an economic world where the large capital accumulations necessary for production must depend on Negro as well as on white savers, but where it is felt desirable for social reasons to maintain white and black institutions even at the cost of tragic waste.

The philosophy of wealth and economic enterprise grips the imagination of the Negro even in the lower stratum.

The tenacity with which this belief in racial economic independence is held, results from a fructification of the bourgeois ideals that social pressure has forced Negroes to emulate, irrespective of social class.

And while there is need for theoretical formulation of Negro economic experience, there are few, if any, trained Negro economists. But even if theoreticians existed in the Negro population, their profoundest formulations, however rational, when contrary to popular assumptions would be futile speculation to a racial group that is looking for solutions and is impatient of theory.

ORGANIZED LABOR AND THE NEGRO

By CHARLES WESLEY

THE American Labor Movement of earlier years had failed to secure any large success for the laboring groups. There were two consequences of this failure. One was renewed interest in the Knights of Labor, an organization which survived the disruptive tendencies of the labor movement after the Civil War, and the other was a new organization, the American Federation of Labor. The Noble Order of the Knights of Labor was organized in 1869, and its first large National Convention was held in 1876. It was supposed, according to its constitution, to make no distinction of race. It was organized to uphold the dignity of labor and to affirm the nobility of all who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. Mr. Powderly, one of its most influential leaders, declared that its purpose was to banish "that curse of modern civilization—wage slavery."

The Negroes were to be organized with the encouragement of the National Organization. By 1885, it was reported that the Negroes were enthusiastically joining the organization, especially in Virginia, where there were seven assemblies in the city of Richmond, and a very large one in Manchester. Because of the lack of discrimination, the Negroes joined the order in many other places. The decline of the organization was as rapid as its rise. After 1886, two factions appeared. One expected to secure labor reform through political action and the other planned to attain it by direct methods. The Knights of Labor exerted much influence on the treatment and organizations of Negro workers. Their declarations rang true, and their

associations and practice of brotherhood had its effects upon local organizations, some of which were not affiliated with it.

At New Orleans in 1883, the Central Trades and Labor Assembly, which was made up of the labor organizations of the city, was making efforts to organize the Negro workers. Parades were held in 1883, 1884 and 1885 in which Negroes took part. It was declared that this action on the part of the assembly did much in breaking up the antagonism between white workers and Negro workers, and that conditions were as fraternal there as in any part of the country. In 1886, the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners reported that there were 14 unions of Negro carpenters affiliated with them in the South, and that they attended the conventions of the Brotherhood. In this year it was stated that the "color line" in labor had been broken and all were working in a common cause.

This statement was not true in all details, for at Richmond in this year an incident occurred which revealed an opposite sentiment among white workingmen. The Knights of Labor met at Richmond at their annual meeting. District Assembly No. 49, of New York, had in its representation a Negro, Mr. F. J. Ferrell. He was received at the meetings, but at the theatres and hotels he received continued rebuffs. When it became known that he occupied one of the best seats in the theatre, many persons left the building, and on the next evening the attendance was small, it was said, for the same reason. At the hotel, when the New York delegation appeared, they were told that Mr. Ferrell would not be admitted. A singular expression of loyalty to their comrade was shown by the delegates who left the place as a group and went to another hotel where no such objections were raised.

Later, in preparation of the program for the exercises in which the Governor of the State was to have part, it was suggested that Mr. Ferrell should be permitted to introduce the Governor. Mr. Powderly, then General Master Work-

man of the Knights of Labor, stated that this would be a violation of the recognized rule of the community, but that he would consider it an honor to have himself introduced to the assembly by Mr. Ferrell, and he in turn would introduce the Governor. In presenting Mr. Powderly, Mr. Ferrell said that one of the objects of the order was the extinction of the color line and he believed that he was presenting a man who was above this superstition. This was true in part, for Mr. Powderly had championed the cause of Mr. Ferrell in a letter to *The Richmond Dispatch,* stating that the organization recognized "no line of race, creed, politics or color." This sentiment was in the thought of labor leaders in this decade. McNeill also wrote that "no Mason and Dixon's line, no color tests divide North, South, East and West. Whenever laborers congregate, whether in the factories of New England or the sunless mines of Pennsylvania, one chord of sympathy unites them all. No demagogue's cant of race or creed will hold them from their purpose to be free."

At the same period the American Federation of Labor was started. This organization was formed in 1881 from among the dissatisfied members of the Knights of Labor. The Federation was founded on the principle of self-determination for the local bodies. Its declaration on matters of race was therefore in the nature of advice to the unions. In 1920, the American Federation of Labor was composed of 110 National and International Unions, 1,286 Local and Federal Unions, 46 State Federations and 926 City Central bodies. The national and international unions have self-government, but the local unions are more circumscribed. At the outset it was declared that associations which refused admission to Negroes were excluded from membership in the Federation. The International Association of Machinists, as we shall note later, was not admitted to membership until the word "white" was removed from its constitution. Such was the early attitude of the American Federation of Labor. There was to be no division on creed,

color, sex or nationality. However, subsequent events were to reveal modifications in the practice of this policy.

Strikes by American workingmen began on a large scale and continued in the decade 1880-1890. The places of the strikers were taken by foreigners and by American Negroes. These substitutions often occasioned bitterness, and only the wisdom of organization leaders prevented bloodshed and violence. Business failures, unemployment, wage quarrels and racial antipathy gave much discredit to the labor movement in this decade. A declaration by the International Labor Union of America in 1878 stated that race was being arrayed against race in the labor struggle, and that this competition was retarding the progress of all workingmen.

In the early days of the labor movement fostered by the American Federation of Labor, the democratic sentiment was so great that there were few evidences on the part of the National organization of any feeling of color. At Birmingham, Alabama, in 1885, the delegates refused to take part in a banquet because there were three Negro delegates who had not been invited. Local unions and national trade organizations often manifested a like liberal spirit. In the same year the Cigarmakers' International Union left a hotel because the Treasurer, who was a Negro, was given a place for the service of his meals outside of the regular dining room. The Cigarmakers had a large number of Negroes who were members and it appeared that they made no race distinction in their membership. In New Orleans the Negro draymen had formed a Union and they sought to make a wage agreement with their employers. The employers refused to treat with the draymen as Unionmen, whereupon organized labor in New Orleans went on a sympathetic strike and recognition was finally secured.

The Negro hod-carriers of Wheeling, West Virginia, had formed an organization known as Labor's Progress Assembly. This organization was affiliated with the Knights of Labor. Another assembly, known as Prosperity

Assembly, was formed. It was composed of workmen of both races in all trades which were not strong enough in numbers to have separate trade unions formed. The laws of the Knights of Labor allowed the formation of these two unions. It thus happened that most of the Negroes belonged to Labor's Progress Assembly and that there were both white and Negro hod-carriers in the Prosperity Assembly. These workmen often were at work on the same locations and at the same tasks. With the organization of the American Federation of Labor, both groups applied for admission, after withdrawing from the Knights of Labor. One of the rules of the Federation was that all men working at one kind of employment must belong to the same local Union. According to this ruling the Negroes and the whites must belong to one Hod-Carriers' Union. Arbitration by the District officers of the Federation was necessary in order to prevent the disruption of both organizations.

In 1899 the same difficulty arose among the longshoremen of Newport News, Virginia. The local unions were composed of Negroes and the whites refused to join them. The question was settled by the issuance of a separate charter to the white workers. Thus the policy of the American Federation was being trimmed to suit local conditions. Its democratic welcome was changed to the policy of separation along racial lines of white and Negro workmen. Foreigners of all types might be received into the regular old-line organizations but Negroes were placed in separate locals.

The Federation Convention of 1897 passed a resolution condemning the statement reported to have been made that the trades unions were placing obstacles in the path of the economic advance of the Negro worker. The convention reaffirmed its welcome to all ranks of labor, "without regard to creed, color, sex, race or nationality." During this session it was said that an affiliated union had no right to limit its membership so as to debar the Negroes.

In spite of these declarations of policy, practical exclusion and separation were in operation, and this action seriously affected the economic status of Negro labor in many localities. In 1900, President Gompers suggested that local unions composed of Negroes should be encouraged and that separate central bodies composed of Negro workers should be established where it was deemed advisable. The convention of 1902 provided that separate charters might be issued to Central Labor Unions, Local Unions and Federal Labor Unions which were composed exclusively of Negro laborers. Thus another step was taken in the separation of the races in their labor organizations.

An investigation concerning the number of Negroes who were in the trades unions was made by Atlanta University in 1902. The list and the tabulations are incomplete and they therefore can be only suggestive of the facts. The following results were reported through correspondence with the trades unions which had a considerable number of Negro members. There were 200 Negro members of the Journeymen Barbers' International Union in 1890 and 800 Negro members in 1900. In 1890 there were only 50 Negro members of the International Brick, Tile and Terracotta Workers' Alliance and 200 in 1900. There were 1,000 Negroes who belonged to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in 1900. The Carriage and Wagon Workers' International Union reported 240 Negro members in 1890 and 500 in 1900. The Coopers International Union had 200 Negro members and the International Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen had 2,700 Negro members in a total membership of 3,600 as reported in 1901. The International Longshoremen's Association had increased its Negro membership from 1,500 in 1890 to 6,000 in 1900. The United Mine Workers of America reported a Negro membership of 20,000 in a total membership of 224,000 in 1901. The Tobacco Workers' International Union reported a decrease. There were 1,500 Negro members in 1890 and 1,000 in 1900. The membership of the

Knights of Labor, as would be expected, showed a decrease from 8,000 in 1890 to 6,000 in 1900.

At this period Negroes were not actively encouraged to become members of the trades unions, and it is not surprising that the increases were small, and that in some cases decreases were recorded. The labor unions had not realized the value of organizing Negro workingmen. The Negro labor leaders in these organizations continued to urge the recognition of Negro labor. The American Federation of Labor had adopted an indifferent attitude. It would not force its views "upon individual or affiliated unions without their consent." Apparently the fight had to be waged from within the local unions. This was difficult because of the barriers against the admission of Negro workers, in the constitutions, the governing regulations, and the social restrictions of the local labor organizations. The line of approach which was followed by Negro labor leaders was the continuance of their efforts in both the national and the local fields with the hope that the national organization would decide in the future to take high ground in the organization of Negro labor.

In 1880 a strike among the Miners in the Tuscarawas Valley, Pennsylvania, led to the importation of Negro workers. Similar strikes in other places led to the same results. Such conditions caused greater activity in the organization of Negro labor. It was thought by labor leaders that it was better to have the cooperation of Negro workingmen than to have their competition, and therefore efforts were made to perfect their organization. The local labor unions as a rule would not accept Negroes, and with organizations refusing membership to them and the members refusing to work with them, the Negro's way to skilled labor was effectively barred. In a few instances Negro applications were accepted, but as rapidly as possible separate unions composed exclusively of Negroes were formed. This sentiment was encouraged by the social tra-

dition through which permanent mixed racial unions were regarded as impossible in the South.

The railroad brotherhoods began to exclude Negroes by constitutional clauses. The International Association of Machinists, which was organized in 1888, inserted a clause in its constitution excluding Negro workers. The American Federation of Labor refused to admit unions which made distinctions based upon color, and thus the Machinists were excluded. The Federation continued to refuse admission to the Association of Machinists because the organization would not remove the color line. Finally in 1891 the Executive Council of the Federation issued a call for a conference of the unions of the trade, and to this meeting the members of the old organization would send no delegates. The delegates who assembled organized the International Machinists' Union. In the report of President Gompers to the Convention of 1890, it was stated that as soon as the old organization had removed the color line, the new organization would pledge itself to amalgamate with the old organization.

At the convention of 1892, a committee of the Federation was appointed to receive the President of the Machinists. He expressed satisfaction at the action of the Executive Council, and said that it was his belief that the Machinists would abolish the barrier against Negroes at their next convention. It was not until 1895 that this action was secured and the convention of the Federation of this year withdrew the charter of the new organization, the International Machinists' Union.

There were unions which made no distinction of race. The Hotel Employees did not exclude Negroes but they insisted that they should be organized in separate local organizations. The Tobacco Workers made no racial differences in their membership. Their constitution stated that they "will draw no line of distinction between creed, color or nationality." However, in the majority of the trades, separate locals have been demanded from the first,

although there were unions in which the two workers met.

In the first annual session of the American Federation of Labor, in 1881, the color question came to the front. The Federation was started from a meeting of the disaffected members of the Knights of Labor. This session was termed the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada. It met at Pittsburgh, September 15-18, 1881. A Negro delegate, Jeremiah Grandison, of the Labor Assembly, Knights of Labor of Pittsburgh, was present. Concerning the purposes of the organization, Mr. Grandison said: "Our object, as I understand it, is to federate the whole laboring element of America. I speak more particularly with a knowledge of my own people and declare to you that it would be dangerous to skilled mechanics to exclude from this organization the common laborers, who might, in an emergency, be employed in positions they could readily qualify themselves to fill." He was urging that the Negroes, who in the main were common laborers, should be organized, but he admitted in his discussion that occasions would arise in which Negroes would be used in higher grades of labor and thereby come in conflict with white workers.

Referring to the admission of the various laboring elements to the Federation at the same session, Mr. Pollner, one of the convention secretaries, representing the Trades Assembly of Cleveland, said: "We recognize neither creed, color nor nationality, but want to take into the folds of this federation the whole labor element of the country, no matter what calling." Mr. Gompers said that it should be the purpose not to exclude "Any workingman who believes in and belongs to organized labor." No mention was made of Negro labor in the constitution of the American Federation of Labor, but the declaration of its first sessions appear to lead to the conclusion that it was opposed to any racial distinction.

One of the causes for the weakness of the Negro Labor Movement was its lack of organization. No organized

efforts had succeeded in creating strong unions among the Negroes. White workmen said that they objected to working with Negroes on this account. Employers said that they could not employ non-union men or their union men would leave. Finally, when there were employers who were bold enough to employ Negroes in spite of the union objections, and when the Negroes became strong competitors with white workmen, the national labor organizations began to take action. As we have noticed, the American Federation of Labor, at the annual meeting of its National Council in 1910, voted to invite the Negro laborers to enter its ranks along with all races. In 1913 this action was reaffirmed. The Federation reported a little later that it had maintained organizers who worked among the Negroes for the purpose of organizing and protecting the interests of labor. There were soon formed unions of exclusive Negro membership, which were affiliated with the Federation, and there were unions composed of whites and blacks who seemed to work together without great friction.

It is interesting to note, however, that while there were 51 national organizations out of 60 which reported in 1913 that there was no constitutional objections to Negro membership, there were nine which barred Negroes from their organizations. These organizations were: The International Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, The Switchmen's Union, The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, The Order of Railway Conductors of America, The Order of Railway Telegraphers, The American Wire Weavers' Protective Association, The International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, and the Iron Shipbuilders and Helpers of America.

The apathy of the majority of the members of the labor unions toward the unionization of Negro workers, and the opposition which Negro workers encountered in many places, caused some of them to coöperate with radical labor

leaders and radical labor organizations. Militant industrialism therefore found supporters in the Negro group. It was not until 1905 that labor militancy seriously challenged the influence of the normal labor movement. A convention was held in Chicago in this year. The result was the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World. From 1909 to 1917 the I. W. W. enjoyed an increasing numerical strength and influence. Its opposition to the war and the activity of the government in prosecuting its search for internal enemies caused a loss of public favor. When members of the I. W. W. were arrested for breaches of the law in war-time, Negroes were discovered in their number. The presence of Negroes among the radical labor groups is another evidence of their dissatisfaction with the efforts of Organized Labor in their behalf.

Negro thinkers also interested themselves in creating a sentiment among the Negro population which would lead to a more serious consideration of the economic basis of life. Several magazines carried this message to all groups. *The Messenger,* a monthly magazine, published in New York under able editorial direction, sent forth a call for aggressive and organized activity. *Opportunity,* another New York monthly, published under the direction of the National Urban League, assumed a more conservative attitude, but in no less clear and certain terms clamored for a larger opportunity for Negro labor and eoncouraged labor organization. *The Crisis,* the organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for years had voiced to the Negro world the need of organized effort in all phases of life. Negro newspapers, such as *The Chicago Defender, The Afro-American, The New York Age* and others considered the interests of labor fundamental to other interests. In the course of events the results of these activities were the more serious consideration of the needs of Negro labor and a more aggressive assault upon the stronghold of American organized labor.

At the conventions of the American Federation in 1916,

1917 and 1918, the problem created by the appearance of Negro labor was discussed and it was decided that the Negroes ought to be organized. But no effective machinery was created to put this decision into operation. A resolution was also presented at this convention by the San Francisco Labor Council favoring the return to Africa of those Negroes who so desired, deploring the treatment of Negroes in the South and requesting the grant of citizenship rights. The resolution had originally been presented to the San Francisco Labor Council by the International Negro League with the request that it be presented to the convention of the American Federation of Labor. There were objections to this resolution when it was presented and it was amended by the statement that the convention was not responsible for these declarations, and in fact rejected them, but as much of the resolution as concerned the organization of Negro Labor was referred to the Executive Council. In this amended form the resolution was passed.

The National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes at its meeting in New York City, January 29-31, 1918, passed resolutions urging the organization of Negro labor and protesting against the past attitude of the American Federation of Labor. *The Labor News* of Detroit asserted that the time had come for "the American Labor Movement to face squarely the fact that the Negro is a big factor in our industrial life and that he must be taken into account in the adjustment of our economic differences; never again can the Negro be ignored. Unionism must welcome the Negro to its ranks."

At the annual meeting of the American Federation in 1918 a letter was read from a committee which represented a number of Negro Organizations. This letter quoted the remarks of President Gompers that Negro workers were welcomed by the Federation and the following suggestions were made: (1) that a published statement of this welcome to Negroes should be given to the public press, (2) that

qualified Negro organizers should be employed by the Federation, (3) that the cooperation of Negro organizations should be encouraged, and (4) that the American Federation of Labor should assume a more advanced position in the matter of Negro workers. The statement was signed by E. K. Jones of the National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes; Fred R. Moore, of *The New York Age;* R. R. Moton, of Tuskegee Institute; J. R. Shilladay, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; A. H. Grimke, of the Washington branch of this association; Thomas J. Jones, Educational Director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund; J. H. Dillard, of the Jeannes Fund; G. C. Hall, of the Chicago Urban League. When the letter was presented, it was referred to the committee on organization, which reported a few days later that the Federation viewed with pleasure that the leaders of the race were realizing the necessity of the organization of Negro labor, and a meaningless declaration was offered by the committee urging that the President of the American Federation of Labor should give special attention to the organization of Negro workers. The report of the committee was unanimously adopted.

At Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1919, several resolutions in the interest of Negro labor were introduced. One of these resolutions made the request that the American Federation of Labor consider the application of a representative group for an international charter of organized Negro labor or exert its influence on the international organizations having jurisdiction over Negro workers, so that charters would be issued to the Negro organizations. Another resolution requested that Negro organizers be appointed since white organizers seemed to have trouble with Negro workmen. A third resolution registered complaint against the International Union of Metal Trades for its refusal to admit Negroes. The committee to which these resolutions were submitted made a study of the organized labor situation among Negroes. The report stated that there were

many Internationals which admitted Negroes and that there were a few, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, which refused to admit Negroes, but the Committee stated that "we hope to see the day when these organizations will take a broader view of this matter." The recommendation was made that in these cases of refusal by the Internationals, the Federation should organize the Negro workers under charters of the Federation. It was also recommended that the Federation Executive Committee should give special attention to the organization of Negro labor by making an assignment of organizers. This action was welcomed in various parts of the country, and it was heralded as the beginning of a new era for Negro Labor.

The following organizations were reported at this convention as not excluding Negroes from membership: the United Mine Workers of America, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the Longshoremen, the Carpenters, the Textile Workers, the Seamen, the Cigarmakers, the Teamsters, the Plasterers, the Bricklayers, the Maintenance of Way Employees, the Laundry Workers, the Cooks and Waiters, the Tailors, the Brewery Workers, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, the Tunnel and Subway Workers, the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railroad Employees, the International Typographical Union, the Brick and Clay Workers, the Hod Carriers and Building Laborers, the Leather Workers, the Blacksmiths, the Motion Picture Players' Union, the American Federation of Musicians, the Bakers, the Postal Employees, the American Federation of Teachers, the Steam and Operating Engineers, the Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees, the Glass Bottle Blowers, the National Association of Federal Employees, the Barbers' International Union, the Metal Polishers, the Stereotypers and Electrotypers, the Boot and Shoe Workers, the Moulders, the Quarry Workers, the Letter Carriers, the International Furnace Workers, the Civil Engineers' Association of Boston, and the Fire-

men and Oilers. While the report asserted that these organizations did not expressly exclude Negroes, yet the Negro applicants have not been welcomed into these organizations and made to feel that they were a vital part of them. They did not expressly exclude Negro membership, but offered little encouragement to them to join.

The most significant action of organized labor in recent times was taken at the Fortieth Convention of the American Federation of Labor in Montreal, June 7-19, 1920. It resulted from the strong presentation of the case for Negro labor by Negro delegates themselves. Resolutions were presented urging that since the World War was ended, and since the American Negro had fought for the freedom due to all, he himself should not be barred from participation in the freedom for which he had fought, and that therefore American labor should recognize him. This set of resolutions was signed by delegates of the Freight Handlers' Union of Jonesboro, Arkansas; the Freight Handlers' Union of Cleveland, Ohio; the Railroad and Freight Handlers' Union of Wichita Falls, Texas; the Railroad Coach and Station Cleaners' and Porters' Union of Cleveland, Ohio; the Baggage Handlers', Freight Handlers', and Stationmen's Union of Philadelphia; the Federal Labor Union of Knoxville, Tennessee, and the Coach and Car Cleaners' Union of Philadelphia.

A second resolution was presented, signed by some of the organizations which are listed above and by several Boilermaker and Blacksmith organizations. It reviewed the fair stand of the American Federation of Labor regarding Negro labor, but it deplored the fact that results had not followed. In order to secure a more successful operation of the Federation among Negroes, it was suggested that (1) a campaign of education among both white and colored workingmen should be conducted in order to convince all persons of "the necessity of bringing into the ranks of labor all men who work, regardless of race, creed or color," that (2) there should be periodic conferences of white

and colored leaders with the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor on questions affecting Negro labor, (3) that there should be employed a competent agent as Executive Secretary of a Special Committee on Negro workers at the Washington headquarters and (4) that there should be, in all states, Negro organizers in all crafts whose duty it would be to build up the Negro membership. These resolutions were submitted to the Committee on Organization which reported a few days later its recommendation to strike out sections two and three of the resolution and that section four should be amended to read that Negro organizers be appointed, where necessary, to organize Negro workers. This last recommendation was referred to the Executive Council for action if the funds of the American Federation of Labor should permit.

The committee to which the first resolution was referred reported a strong statement of the attitude of the Federation toward Negro labor. It read, "The American Federation of Labor has never countenanced the drawing of a color line or discrimination against individuals because of race, creed or color. It recognizes that human freedom is a gift from the Creator to all mankind and is not to be denied to any because of social position or the limitations of caste or class, and that any cause which depends for its success on the denial of this fundamental principle of liberty cannot stand. We, therefore, concur in the resolution and recommend its adoption." The report of the Committee was adopted.

A third group of resolutions was submitted to this convention by representatives of the Railroad Machinists, the Boilermakers, the Blacksmiths, the Sheet Metal Workers, the Carmen, the Painters, and Trade Wagoners. These resolutions accompanied a petition requesting that the American Federation of Labor exercise its influence to have the Internationals accord recognition to the local Negro organizations which should come properly under their jurisdiction. This action was requested since there were a few of the larger

organizations which refused admittance to Negroes. There were 110 national and international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, and it was said that more than 100 of these admitted Negroes to membership. There are eleven national and international unions which refuse by specific ruling to grant the privilege of membership to Negroes. Many other unions discourage Negro membership.

It was reported also that four of the six nationals and internationals which were not affiliated with the American Federation of Labor had provisions excluding Negroes. These included the Railroad Brotherhoods. Through a meeting of representatives of 27 different states in 1921, the result of this action was the creation of a Colored National Railroad Organization with Chicago as the headquarters. There were, however, two organizations, not affiliated with the American Federation of Labor which admitted Negroes—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and the Industrial Workers of the World.

The autonomy of the international unions has been respected absolutely by the American Federation of Labor, and their independent government has been conceded. It was, therefore, an unusual procedure which led this convention to request an affiliated organization to remove an excluding provision from its constitution. The Brotherhood of Railway Clerks had a clause expressly admitting white workers to membership. The constitution of the American Federation of Labor did not contain such a clause. Moreover, at the previous annual convention at Atlantic City, the President of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks had promised to arrange the question of Negro membership in a satisfactory manner. When the Executive Committee, to which the matter was referred, met in Cincinnati, the question was passed over without action.

At the Montreal Convention, a resolution was presented requesting that the Federation use every means in its power either to have the words "only white" stricken from the

constitution of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, or to have this Brotherhood relinquish its jurisdiction over the Negro workers and grant them the privilege of establishing a Brotherhood of their own. The committee on organization to which the resolution was referred, reported that it could not concur in the resolution since the American Federation of Labor could not interfere with the autonomy of the Affiliated nationals and internationals. In addition, the report stated that the Negroes had the opportunity to join the Federation, for the Convention of 1919 had authorized the granting of charters to colored workers in cases where the nationals and internationals had refused to accept them.

A debate followed this report. One delegate asked if it was not contrary to the principles of the American Federation of Labor to draw the color line. Vice-President Duncan replied that the Federation, since its organization, had stood for federation without reference to color and that this was the position which it still assumed. He stated that the organization could not be expected to favor a charter of an affiliated union which discriminated against a worker because of his color. After some discussion, an amendment to the report was carried requesting the Railway Clerks to remove the words "only white" from their constitution. Although this action was contrary to the accepted principle of complete governmental freedom for the internationals, the convention carried the amendment over the recommendation of the committee. It was also voted later that the Brotherhood of Railroad Carmen should eliminate from their constitution all reference to colored workmen.

At the next annual session of the American Federation of Labor at Denver, Colorado, it was stated that there were still some internationals which excluded Negroes. Jordan W. Chambers, a Negro delegate, said that the convention had ordered the word "white" stricken out, and also that conferences should be held between the officers of the internationals and the Negroes who sought membership, but

that in a few cases only had action been taken. He advocated effective action on the part of the Federation. Specific complaints were presented against the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, the Iron Ship Builders and Helpers of America, the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, the Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees, calling attention to either exclusion or discrimination. A motion that there should be no discriminating laws in organized labor failed of adoption. In response to one resolution, President Gompers said that "The American Federation of Labor, almost from its inception, has declared that it is the duty of all workers to organize, regardless of sex, nationality, race, religion or political affiliation. That declaration has been emphasized time and time again in the conventions of the American Federation of Labor; that declaration forms a part of the literature issued by the American Federation of Labor. That is the policy and principle of the American Federation of Labor, but it cannot enforce that declaration upon the affiliated international unions if those international unions decline or refuse to adopt them." However, conferences were ordered with the internationals within 90 days, with the object in view of having them change their attitude toward Negro labor.

In July, August and September, 1921, as a result of conferences in Washington and at Toronto, organizations of Negro Freight Handlers and Station Employees were organized and Negroes were granted admission to other unions. The Brotherhood of Railroad Carmen agreed to admit separate lodges of Negroes under the jurisdiction of the nearest white local. The American Federation of Labor has thus sanctioned the principle of race separation, although in words of declaration and policy it has proclaimed the necessity for all workers to organize. Racial barriers have made their way into the ranks of labor. There are some organizations where Negro and white workmen work and meet side by side. It is reported that this is the

situation among the Longshoremen, the Garment Workers, the Candy Makers, the Stenographers and a few of the Building Trades. At the Biennial Session of the International Longshoremen's Convention at Buffalo, New York, in July, 1921, there were 80 Negro delegates who were present. Sixty-five of these delegates were from the North and 15 were from the South.

As a rule, however, the organization of Negro labor has not been encouraged as much as the organization of other groups. This is unfortunate, in view of the fact that Negroes form so large a part of the economic life of the United States. One of the significant results of the indifference of the American Federation of Labor has been the tendency for Negro Labor to organize itself independent of White Labor. The most important national organizations which have been organized on this basis are, The International Order of Colored Locomotive Firemen, The National Order of Locomotive Firemen, and The Shopmen's Craft of the Railway Men's International Benevolent Industrial Association. At Birmingham, Alabama, in January, 1921, a National Federation of Railway Men was organized. In May of that year a meeting of these groups was held in the same city, at which there were delegates from 15 states and railroad workers from 26 railroads. In addition to these persons there were representatives from 150 international trade organizations who were present. This type of independent organization may be expected to continue so long as Organized Labor does not give a ready welcome to Negro Workers.

This attitude of Organized Labor has led, on the one hand, to renewed agitation by Negroes themselves in the interest of the organization of Negro Labor and, on the other, to an increase in the possibility of radicalism among Negroes. At the 1924 Convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the following statement in the form of an open letter was presented:

An Open Letter to the American Federation of Labor and Other Groups of Organized Labor

Gentlemen:

For many years the American Negro has been demanding admittance to the ranks of union labor.

For many years your organizations have made public profession of your interest in Negro labor, of your desire to have it unionized, and of your hatred of the black "scab."

Notwithstanding this apparent surface agreement, Negro labor in the main is outside the ranks of organized labor, and the reason is, first, that white union labor does not want black labor, and, secondly, black labor has ceased to beg admittance to union ranks because of its increasing value and efficiency outside the unions.

We thus face a crisis in inter-racial labor conditions; the continued and determined racial prejudice of white labor, together with the limitation of immigration, is giving black labor tremendous advantage. The Negro is entering the ranks of semi-skilled and skilled labor and he is entering mainly and necessarily as a "scab." He broke the great steel strike. He will soon be in a position to break any strike when he can gain economic advantage for himself.

On the other hand, intelligent Negroes know full well that a blow at organized labor is a blow at all labor; that black labor today profits by the blood and sweat of labor leaders in the past who have fought oppression and monopoly by organization. If there is built up in America a great black bloc of non-union laborers who have a right to hate unions, all laborers, black and white, eventually must suffer.

Is it not time, then, that black and white labor got together? Is it not time for white unions to stop bluffing and for black laborers to stop cutting off their noses to spite their faces?

We, therefore, propose that there be formed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Federation of Labor, the Railway Brotherhoods and any other bodies agreed upon, an Inter-racial Labor Commission.

We propose that this Commission undertake:

1. To find out the exact attitude and practice of national

labor bodies and local unions toward Negroes, and of Negro labor toward unions.

2. To organize systematic propaganda against racial discrimination on the basis of these facts at the great labor meetings, in local assemblies, and in local unions.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stands ready to take part in such a movement and hereby invites the coöperation of all organized labor. The association hereby solemnly warns American laborers that unless some such step as this is taken, and taken soon, the position gained by organized labor in this country is threatened with irreparable loss.

About the same time the National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes established a Department of Industrial Relations. Some of the purposes of this department were: to encourage friendly relations between white and black workingmen; to encourage technical education; "the organization and assistance of Negro mechanics; and the opening and finding of positions for Colored Workers." The major part of the work of the Urban League in at least 29 cities is laid to Negro workmen. At its meeting in Detroit in 1919 the League adopted the following resolution concerning unionism: "We believe that Negroes should begin to think more and more in terms of labor-group movements, so as ultimately to reap the benefit of thinking in unison. To this end we advise Negroes to organize with white men whenever conditions are favorable. When this is not possible, they should band together to bargain with employers and with organized labor alike. With America and the whole world in labor turmoil, we urge white and black men, capital and labor, to be fair and patient with each other while a just solution is being worked out." The Inter-racial Committees in various parts of the country have taken great interest in improving the condition of Negro workingmen.

Radicalism has taken new developments among Negro laborers since the World War. Sympathy for Russia's new

experiment was not unknown among Negro-Americans from the first. The declarations of the Russian labor congress seemed to ring true on racial matters. The Fourth Congress of the Third Internationale in 1922 declared that its purpose was "not simply the organization of the enslaved white workers of Europe and America, but equally the organization of the oppressed colored peoples of the World." It was also agreed that it would "fight for race equality of the Negro with the white people, as well as for equal wages and political and social rights." The fact that radicalism among Negroes was being organized was demonstrated in the American Negro Labor Congress of 1925. This Congress met in Chicago, October 25-31. The addresses and resolutions attacked the policies of Organized Labor, in words which declared that "the failure of the American Federation of Labor officialdom, under pressure of race prejudice benefiting only the capitalists of the North and South, to stamp out race hatred in the unions, to organize Negro workers, and to build a solid front of the workers of both races against American Capitalism, is a crime against the whole working class. If the unions of the American Federation of Labor, through ignorance and prejudice, fail in this duty to the American workers and continue a policy of exclusion in the face of the influx of Negro workers into industry, we Negro workers must organize our own unions as a powerful weapon with which to fight our way into the existing labor movement on a basis of full equality." Thus the Negro asserts his own right to organize if neglected by others. The American Negro Labor Congress was sponsored by the Workers Party of America, and with its appeal on the basis of racial equality there is no doubt that the influences of this group will be predominant. If the conservative old-line labor organization will not accept the proffer of cooperation, Negro Labor will find its own way to organization. This is demonstrated in the recent organization of the Pullman Porters through the able leadership of Mr. A. Philip Randolph,

Editor of *The Messenger*. At the present writing, in spite of the opposition of the Pullman Company and the apathy of some of the porters themselves, over one-half of these workers are organized.

If Negroes perform, as it has been asserted, one-seventh of the labor in the United States, the labor organizations of America can never be effective until the great mass of Negro workers are organized. The complaint cannot be made continuously that the Negro does not take to the unions and that he is not a "union-man." No workman who finds it to his interest to remain a non-union man will ever give up the privilege. Membership in a union should offer some advantage to the Negro. To every white workingman the union offers superior advantages. When union men strike, non-union men have large opportunity. These instances have been the occasions on which Negro labor has entered avenues which were hitherto closed to it. In the Steel Strike of 1919-1920, Negroes were employed as strike-breakers, and in the coal strike of 1922 Negroes were introduced into the Pennsylvania coal fields. The result in each case was the realization among union workers that Negroes should be unionized. The United Mine Workers made strenuous efforts to bring Negroes into the local unions in the latter instance. Therefore, in the interest of itself, Organized Labor must organize the Negro workingmen. For this work Negro organizers should be appointed. In the present state of our race relations, it is exceedingly difficult for the average white organizer to sympathize fully with the special problems of Negro Labor and to encourage effectively its organization. The migration, with the resulting transfer of Negroes from agriculture to industry, has increased the necessity for *action* and not finely phrased declarations by Organized Labor.

THE DISGRACE OF DEMOCRACY

An Open Letter to President Woodrow Wilson

By KELLY MILLER

August 4, 1917.

Hon. Woodrow Wilson,
President of the United States,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Mr. President:

I am taking the liberty of intruding this letter upon you because I feel that the issues involved are as important as any questions now pressing upon your busy attention. The whole civilized world has been shocked at the recent occurrences in Memphis and East St. Louis. These outbreaks call attention anew to the irritating race problem of which they are but eruptive symptoms which break forth ever and anon with Vesuvian violence. For fully a generation American statesmanship has striven to avoid, ignore or forget the perplexing race problem. But this persistent issue will not down at our bidding, and cannot be shunted from public attention by other questions however momentous or vital they may seem to be.

I know that I am taking unwarranted liberties with the ceremonial proprieties in writing such a letter to the President of the United States at the present time. It may seem to partake of the spirit of heckling after the manner of the suffragists. Nothing is further from my purpose. No right-minded American would wish to add one featherweight to the burden that now so heavily taxes the mind and body of the President of the United States who labors under as

heavy a load as human nature is capable of sustaining. Every citizen should strive to lighten rather than to aggravate that burden. It is, nevertheless, true that any suppressed and aggrieved class must run athwart the established code of procedure in order that their case may receive a just hearing. Ceremonial codes were enacted by those who are the beneficiaries of existing order which they wish to perpetuate and make unchangeable. They would estop all social and moral reform. The ardent suffragists find it necessary to ruthlessly violate the traditional and decorous modes of procedure in order to promote the reform which they have at heart. On one occasion you felt forced to terminate an interview with a committee of suffragists because they persisted in cross-examining the President of the United States.

There are 10,000,000 loyal citizens of African descent in the United States. They are rigorously excluded from a voice in the government by which they are controlled. They have no regularly constituted organ through which to present their case to the powers that be. They have no seat nor voice in the council of the nation. The late Doctor Booker T. Washington was the accepted spokesman and mediator of the race, but he has no successor. Under former administrations there was a small appointive official class of Negroes. Though derisively designated as the "Black Cabinet," they were on the inside of the circle of governmental control to which they had ready access in presenting the claims of the race. But under the exaction of partisan exigencies even these have been excluded from official position under your administration. Several weeks ago a delegation of colored men from the State of Maryland sought an interview with you concerning the horrible crime of East St. Louis. You were good enough to write Senator France that you were too busy with other pressing issues to grant the request of an interview. The failure of all other methods is my only excuse for resorting to an open letter as a means of reaching you and, through you, the nation

at large, concerning the just grievances of 10,000,000 loyal American citizens.

The Negro feels that he is not regarded as a constituent part of American democracy. This is our fundamental grievance and lies at the basis of all of the outrages inflicted upon this helpless race. It is the fundamental creed of democracy that no people are good enough to govern any other people without their consent and participation. The English are not good enough to govern the Irish. The Russians are not good enough to govern the Finns. The Germans are not good enough to govern the Belgians. The Belgians are not good enough to govern the people of the Congo. Men are not considered good enough to govern women. The white people of this country are not good enough to govern the Negro. As long as the black man is excluded from participating in the government of the nation, just so long will he be the victim of cruelty and outrage on the part of his white fellow citizens who assume lordship over him.

These periodic outbreaks of lawlessness are but the outgrowth of the disfavor and despite in which the race is held by public opinion. The evil is so widespread that the remedy lies in the hands of the national government.

Resolutions pending before both houses of Congress look toward investigation of the outrage at East St. Louis. I understand that you are sympathetically disposed toward this investigation by Federal authority. Such investigation is important only to the extent that it implies a tardy recognition of national responsibility for local lawlessness. There is no expectation that any additional comprehensive information will result. You may rest assured that there will be a half dozen similar outbreaks before this investigation is well under way. Indeed, since the East St. Louis atrocity there have already been lynchings in Georgia, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Montana. Every intelligent American knows as much about the essential cause of this conflict as he will know after long and tedious investigation. The vital

issues involved are apt to be obscured by technical wranglings over majority and minority reports. What the nation needs is not investigation of obvious fact, but determination and avowed declaration on the part of the President speaking for the people of the United States to put an end to lawlessness wherever it raises its hideous head.

I know that it has been steadily maintained that the Federal Government has no authority over lynchings and local race conflicts. This is not a political contention. This view was maintained under the administrations of Harrison, Cleveland, McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft. Indeed, President Cleveland, that great American democrat, came nearer recognizing Federal responsibility in such matters than any President before or since his time. During the administration of President McKinley, an atrocious riot occurred in Wilmington, N. C., the city in which you spent your boyhood as the son of a minister of the Gospel. Scores of innocent Negroes were killed and hundreds were driven from their homes. But it was maintained that the President had no authority to interfere. A horrible lynching took place at Alexandria, Virginia, a few miles from the White House, which the President might possibly have observed through his field glasses. And yet it was looked upon as a purely local affair for which the Federal Government had no responsibility nor concern. You recall the atrocities of the riot in Atlanta, a city in which you spent your young manhood as a practitioner of law. But here again even President Roosevelt could find no ground for interference.

These outbreaks are not limited to the Southern States, although they occur there more frequently than elsewhere because of the relatively larger number of Negroes in the total population. There have been lynchings and burnings in Illinois, Kansas, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Colorado and other Northern States. The evil is indeed national in its range and scope, and the nation must provide the remedy. Striking indeed is the analogy between the spread of lawlessness today and the extension of the institution of

slavery two generations ago. Like slavery, lawlessness cannot be localized. As the nation could not exist half slave and half free under Abraham Lincoln, so it cannot continue half law-abiding and half lawless under Woodrow Wilson. The evil tendency overcomes the good, just as the darker overlaps the brighter phase in the waning moon. If the Negro is allowed to be lynched in the South with impunity, he will soon be lynched in the North, so easy is the communicability of evil suggestion. The lynching of Negroes has become fashionable in some parts of the country. When a black man is accused of wrongdoing, "Lynch the Negro!" is the cry that springs spontaneously to the lips of man, woman and child. The fashion is rapidly spreading throughout the whole nation. If slavery could have been isolated and segregated in the South that institution might have existed even down to the present time. And so, if lynching could be localized and limited to the Southern States the nation as a whole would have less pretext for interfering. But this cannot be done. Senator Tombs of Georgia boasted that he would call the roll of his slaves under the shadow of the Bunker Hill monument, an ambition which, doubtless, might have been gratified had not the nation arisen in its moral might and blotted out the iniquitous institution altogether. Unless the aroused conscience of the American people, efficiently asserting itself through Federal authority, shall stamp out the spirit of lawlessness, it is easy to prophesy that the Negro will yet be lynched not only in the shadow of the Bunker Hill monument, but on the campus of your beloved Princeton. Already there have been burnings of human beings in the bleeding State of Old John Brown, and in the city where lie the remains of Abraham Lincoln. During the past thirty years nearly 3,000 Negroes have been lynched in various parts of the country. Scores of these have been burned at the stake. Even the bodies of women have been fed to the flames. Thousands of localities in the majority of the States of the Union have experienced these

outrages. Our fair land of liberty is blotted over with these foul spots which cannot be washed out by all of the waters of the ocean. It is not easy to calculate the number of persons who have been involved in these lynchings, either as participants or as acquiescent lookers-on, all of whom were potential murderers. So general and widespread has become the practice that lynching may well be characterized as a national institution, to the eternal disgrace of American democracy.

Lynching cannot be confined to the Negro race. Hundreds of white men have been the victims of lawlessness and violence. While these words are flowing from my pen, news comes over the wire that a labor agitator has been lynched in the State of Montana. Although the Negro is at present the chief victim of lawlessness, like any other evil disease, it cannot be limited by racial lines.

It is but hollow mockery of the Negro, when he is beaten and bruised and burned in all parts of the nation and flees to the national government for asylum, to be denied relief on the ground of doubtful jurisdiction. The black man asks for justice and is given a theory of government. He asks for protection and is confronted with a scheme of governmental checks and balances.

Mr. President, you are commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy. You express the voice of the American people in the great world conflict which involves practically the entire human race. You are the accepted spokesman of the world democracy. You have sounded forth the trumpet of democratization of the nations, which shall never call retreat. But, Mr. President, a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. A doctrine that breaks down at home is not fit to be propagated abroad. One is reminded of the pious slaveholder who became so deeply impressed with the plea for foreign missions that he sold one of his slaves to contribute liberally to the cause. Why democratize the nations of the earth if it leads them to delight in the burning of human beings after the manner of Springfield, Waco,

Memphis, and East St. Louis, while the nation looks helplessly on? You add nothing to the civilization of the world nor to the culture of the human spirit by the technical changes in forms of government. The old adage still remains true:

> "For forms of government let fools contest—
> What's best administered—is best."

If democracy cannot control lawlessness, then democracy must be pronounced a failure. The nations of the world have a right to demand of us the workings of the institutions at home before they are promulgated abroad. The German press will, doubtless, gloat with ghoulish glee over American atrocities against the Negro. The outrages complained of against the Belgians become merciful performances by gruesome comparison. Our frantic wail against the barbarity of Turk against Armenian, German upon Belgian, Russian upon Jew, are made of no effect. It cannot be said that these outbreaks are but the spontaneous ebullitions of popular feeling without governmental sanction or approval. These outrages occur all over the nation. The nation must be responsible for what it permits. Sins of permission are as reprehensible as sins of commission. A few years ago a Turkish ambassador was handed his passports by you for calling attention to the inconsistency between our national practice and performance. The nation was compelled, with a spirit of humiliation, to accept the reproach which he hurled into our teeth: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Every high-minded American must be touched with a tinge of shame when he contemplates that his rallying cry for the liberation of humanity is made a delusion and a snare by these racial barbarities.

It is needless to attempt to place the blame on the helpless Negro. In the early stages of these outbreaks there was an attempt to fix an evil and lecherous reputation on the

Negro race as lying at the basis of lynching and lawlessness. Statistics most clearly refute this contention. The great majority of the outbreaks cannot even allege rapeful assault in extenuation. It is undoubtedly true that there are imbruted and lawless members of the Negro race, as there are of the white race, capable of committing any outrageous and hideous offense. The Negro possesses the imperfections of his status. His virtues as well as his failures are simply human. It is a fatuous philosophy, however, that would resort to cruel and unusual punishment as a deterrent to crime. Lynching has never made one Negro virtuous nor planted the seed of right doing in the mind of a single American citizen. The Negro should be encouraged in all right directions to develop his best manly and human qualities. Where he deviates from the accepted standard he should be punished by due process of law. But as long as the Negro is held in general despite and suppressed below the level of human privilege, just so long will he produce a disproportionate number of imperfect individuals of evil propensity. To relegate the Negro to a status that encourages the baser instincts of humanity, and then denounce him because he does not stand forth as a model of human perfection, is of the same order of ironical cruelty as shown by the barbarous Teutons in Shakespeare, who cut off the hands and hacked out the tongue of the lovely Lavinia, and then upbraided her for not calling for perfumed water to wash her delicate hands. The Negro is neither angelic nor diabolical, but merely human, and should be treated as such.

The vainglorious boast of Anglo-Saxon superiority will no longer avail to justify these outrages. The contact, adjustment and attrition of various races of mankind constitute a problem which is coterminous with the ends of the earth. The lighter and stronger races are coming into contact with the weaker and darker ones. The stronger breeds of men are relating themselves to the weaker members of the human family in all the ends of the earth. How

does it happen that in the United States alone, of all civilized lands, these atrocious outrages are heaped upon the helpless Negro? The English nation has the largest colonial experience and success since the days of the Roman empire, and has come into relationship with the various weaker breeds of men in all parts of the world. But everywhere under English jurisdiction law and order prevail. In the West Indies, where Negroes outnumber the whites 20 to 1, rape and lynching have scarcely yet found a place in the local vocabulary. In Brazil, under a Latin dispensation, where a more complex racial situation exists than in the United States, racial peace and good-will prevail. Belgium furnishes the only parallel of civilized nations, in the atrocious treatment of a helpless people placed in their charge. But even the Belgians were forced to modify the rigors of their outrageous régime in the Congo, under the bombardment of moral sentiment of the more enlightened nations of the world. America enjoys the evil distinction among all civilized nations of the earth of taking delight in murder and burning of human beings. Nowhere else do men, women and children dance with ghoulish glee and fight for ghastly souvenirs of human flesh and mock the dying groans of the helpless victim which sicken the air, while the flickering flames of the funeral pyre lighten the midnight sky with their lurid glare.

Mr. President, the American conscience has been touched and quickened by the East St. Louis outbreak as it has never been before. Press and pulpit have tried to forget these outrages. At each fresh outbreak they would lash themselves into a spasm of virtue and exhaust the entire vocabulary of denunciation, but, forthwith, would lapse into sudden silence and acquiescent guilt. By some fatuous delusion they seem to hope that the atrocities of Springfield, Wilmington, Waco, Atlanta, Memphis and a thousand other places of evil report would never be repeated, nor the memory rise up to condemn the nation. But silence and neglect merely result in compounding atrocities. The

East St. Louis outbreak convinces the nation, as it has never been before, that the time for action has come. The press is not content with a single editorial ebullition, but by repeated utterances insists that the nation shall deal with its most malignant domestic evil. Reproach is cast upon your contention for the democratization of the world, in face of its lamentable failure at home. Ex-President Roosevelt, who is the greatest living voice now crying aloud for individual and national righteousness, has openly proclaimed, in dramatic declaration, that these outbreaks make our moral propaganda for the liberation of mankind but a delusion and a snare. Mr. President, can this nation hope to live and to grow in favor with God and man on the basis of a lie? A nation with a stultified conscience is a nation with stunted power.

Democracies have frequently shut their eyes to moral inconsistencies. The democracy of Greece conferred privilege upon a mere handful of freemen in the midst of ten times their own number of slaves. The Greek philosophers and statesmen were supremely unconscious of this moral obliquity. The Declaration of Independence which declared for the equality of all men was written by a slaveholder. The statesmen of the period, however, hoped that slavery would be of short-lived duration, and would effect its own solution in the process of time. But Thomas Jefferson was keenly sensitive of the moral inconsistency of this attitude, and declared that he trembled when he considered that God is just, and that His justice would not slumber forever. Abraham Lincoln is perhaps the only great statesman of democracy who was absolutely consistent in his logical attitude and moral sincerity. The nation believed in his moral integrity. He uttered no word of cryptic meaning. The people heard him gladly because the words that fell from his lips were not the coinage of his intellect, but the mintage of his heart. The embattled hosts under his high command marched to victory with the Battle Hymn of the Republic resounding in their souls:

As He died to make men holy,
Let us die to make men free—

To them this phrase had no remote and deferred meaning, but was immediately applicable to their black brother in chains. It was not a barren ideality, but a living impulse. You have given the rallying cry for the present world crisis. But this shibboleth will be robbed of instant meaning and power unless it applies to the helpless within our own gates. If the sons and grandsons of the heroes who battered down the walls of slavery a half century ago could be made to feel with unreserved certainty a renewal of the moral energy which urged their fathers to that high resolve, they would, with heightened enthusiasm for humanity, demolish the Teutonic bulwarks of oppression across the seas.

Doctrine is more than deeds, if it be sound doctrine. Deeds are the outgrowth of doctrine. Doctrine lives forever with persistent potentiality. Doctrine rules the world or throws it into confusion. The power of words is far greater than the meaning of the author. It makes no difference what lay in the minds or practice of the statesmen of Greece. They planted the seeds of democracy, and all mankind will become the beneficiary of the sowing. The intendment of the signers of the Declaration of Independence boots but little. That document will stand for all time as the gospel of human liberty. When you speak of the democratization of the world and the liberation of mankind, you are setting up a standard to which the whole world must rise in the ages to come, despite its attitude at the present time. It may be far from the purpose of our present-day statesmen to admit the Negro into this democracy on terms of equality with the rest. But in spite of the purpose of this statesmanship, this must be the ultimate goal of human democracy. A democracy of race or class is no democracy at all. It is with projected imagination that the Negro will endure until these high-sounding phrases

have borne their full fruition. Any other class of the American people, under the strain of distress to which the Negro has been subjected, would imitate Job's distracted wife, and curse the white God and die. The Negro will neither curse nor die, but grin and live—albeit beneath that grin is a groaning of spirit too deep for utterance. The Negro says to his country, "Though you slay me, yet will I serve you."

The Negro's patriotism is vicarious and altruistic. It seems to be an anomaly of fate that the Negro, the man of all men who is held in despite, should stand out in conspicuous relief at every crisis of our national history. His blood offering is not for himself or for his race, but for his country. This blood flows like a stream through our national history, from Boston Common to Carrizal. Crispus Attucks was the first American to give his blood as an earnest of American independence. The Negro was with Washington in the dark days of Valley Forge, when the lamp of national liberty flickered almost to extinguishment. The black troops fought valiantly with Jackson behind the fleecy breastworks at New Orleans. Two hundred thousand black boys in blue responded to the call of the immortal Lincoln for the preservation of the Union. The Negro was the positive cause of the Civil War, and the negative cause of the united nation with which we face the world today.

The reckless daring of Negro troops on San Juan Hill marked the turning point in that struggle which drove the last vestige of Spanish power from the Western world. It was but yesterday that we buried with honor at Arlington Cemetery the Negro soldiers who fell face forward while carrying the flag to the farthest point in the heart of Mexico, in quest of the bandit who dared place impious foot on American soil. In complete harmony with this marvelous patriotic record, it so happened that it was an American Negro who proved to be the first victim of ruthless submarine warfare, after you had distinctly announced to Germany that such outrage would be considered tanta-

mount to war. In all of these ways has the Negro shown, purposely or unconsciously, his undeviating devotion to the glory and honor of the nation. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his country.

In the midst of the world war for the democratization of mankind the Negro will do his full share. I have personally always striven to urge the Negro to be patriotic and loyal in every emergency. At the Reserve Officers' Training Camp in Fort Des Moines there are over one hundred young colored men who have come under my instruction. The deviltry of his fellow men cannot devise iniquities horrible enough to drive him from his patriotic devotion. The Negro, Mr. President, in this emergency, will stand by you and the nation. Will you and the nation stand by the Negro?

I believe, Mr. President, that to the victor belong the spoils, especially if these spoils be human liberty. After this war for the liberation of mankind has been won through the Negro's patriotic participation, he will repeat the lines of the old familiar hymn somewhat louder than ever:

> Behold a stranger at the door,
> He gently knocks, has knocked before,
> Has waited long, is waiting still,
> You treat no other friend so ill.

As a student of public questions I have carefully watched your attitude on the race problem. You have preserved a lukewarm aloofness from the tangled issues of this problem. In searching your writings one finds little or no reference to this troubled phase of American life. It seems that you regard it as a regrettable social malady to be treated with cautious and calculated neglect. There is observable, however, a passive solicitude. You have kept the race problem in the back part of your mind. Your letter to Bishop Walters during your first campaign for the Presidency, expressing a generous concern for the welfare of the race, though of a general and passive character, caused many

Negroes to give you their political support. Under the stress and strain of other pressing issues and the partisan demands of your political supporters you have not yet translated this passive purpose into positive performance. There is, however, something of consolation in the fact that while during your entire career you have never done anything constructive for the Negro, you have never done anything destructive against him. Your constructive opportunity is now at hand. The time has come to make lawlessness a national issue, as a war measure if not from any higher consideration. As a patriotic and military necessity, I suggest that you ask the Congress of the United States to invest you with the power to prevent lynching and to quell lawlessness and violence in all parts of the country during the continuance of the war. Or at least you might quicken the conscience of the nation by a stirring message to Congress calling attention to this growing evil which is gnawing at the vitals of the nation. It is entirely probable that before the war is over you will have to resort to some such measure to control internal disturbances on other accounts. It is inconceivable that this nation should spend billions of dollars and sacrifice the lives of millions of its citizens without domestic uprising and revulsion. In such a time it becomes necessary for the President to exercise all but dictatorial power. The country is willing to grant you anything you ask which, in your judgment, would promote the welfare of the nation in this crisis. You asked Congress to grant undiscriminated use of the Panama Canal as a means of securing international good-will and friendship, and it was granted. In face of the impending conflict, you demanded that Congress should grant the eight-hour demand of the laboring men, and it was done. The suffragists who guard your going in and coming out of the White House were duly convicted under process of law, but were immediately pardoned by you to avoid embarrassment in this war emergency. You asked for billions of dollars and millions of lives to be placed at your disposal

for the purpose of carrying on the great conflict, and it was willingly granted. The people have willingly placed in your hands more power than has ever been exercised by any member of the human race and are willing to trust you in the use of that power. I am sure that they will grant this additional authority during the continuance of the present war in order to secure the unqualified patriotic devotion of all of the citizens and to safeguard the honor of democracy and the good name of the republic.

Mr. President, Negroes all over this nation are aroused as they have never been before. It is not the wild hysteria of the hour, but a determined purpose that this country shall be made a safe place for American citizens to live and work and enjoy the pursuits of happiness. Ten thousand speechless men and women marched in silent array down Fifth Avenue in New York City as a spectral demonstration against the wrongs and cruelties heaped upon the race. Negro women all over the nation have appointed a day of prayer in order that righteousness might be done to this people. The weaker sex of the weaker race are praying that God may use you as the instrument of His will to promote the cause of human freedom at home. I attended one of these 6 o'clock prayer meetings in the city of Washington. Two thousand humble women snatched the early hours of the morning before going to their daily tasks to resort to the house of prayer. They literally performed unto the Lord the burden of their prayer and song, "Steal Away to Jesus." There was not a note of bitterness nor denunciation throughout the season of prayer. They prayed as their mothers prayed in the darker days gone by, that God would deliver the race. Mr. President, you can help God answer their prayer. May it not be that these despised and rejected daughters of a despised and rejected race shall yet lead the world to its knees in acknowledgment of some controlling power outside of the machinations of man? As I sat there and listened in reverent silence to these two thousand voices as they sang,—

On Christ, the Solid Rock, I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand—

I could not but think of the godless war which is now convulsing the world—a war in which Christian hands are dyed in Christian blood. It must cause the Prince of Peace to groan as in His dying agony when He gave up the ghost on the cross. The professed followers of the Meek and Lowly One, with heathen heart, are putting their trust in reeking tube and iron shard. God uses the humbler things of life to confound the mighty. It may be that these helpless victims of cruelty and outrage will bring an apostate world back to God.

Mr. President, ten million of your fellow citizens are looking to you and to the God whom you serve to grant them relief in this hour of their deepest distress. All moral reforms grow out of the people who suffer and stand in need of them. The Negro's helpless position may yet bring America to a realizing sense that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Yours truly,

KELLY MILLER.

LA BOURGEOISIE NOIRE

By E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

RADICALS are constantly asking the question: Why does the Negro, the man farthest down in the economic as well as social scale, steadily refuse to ally himself with the radical groups in America? On the other hand, his failure so far to show sympathy to any extent with the class which *a priori* would appear to be his natural allies has brought praise from certain quarters. Southern white papers when inclined to indulge in sentimental encomiums about the Negro cite his immunity to radical doctrines as one of his most praiseworthy characteristics. Negro orators and, until lately, Negro publications, in pleading for the Negro's claim to equitable treatment, have never failed to boast of the Negro's undying devotion to the present economic order. Those whites who are always attempting to explain the Negro's social behavior in terms of hereditary qualities have declared that the Negro's temperament is hostile to radical doctrines. But the answer to what is a seeming anomaly to many is to be found in the whole social background of the Negro. One need not attribute it to any peculiar virtue (according as one regards virtue) or seek an explanation in such an incalculable factor as racial temperament.

The first mistake of those who think that the Negro of all groups in America should be in revolt against the present system is that they regard the Negro group as homogeneous. As a matter of fact, the Negro group is highly differentiated, with about the same range of interests as the whites. It is very well for white and black radicals to quote statistics to show that ninety-eight per

cent of the Negroes are workers and should seek release from their economic slavery; but as a matter of fact ninety-eight per cent of the Negroes do not regard themselves as in economic slavery. Class differentiation among Negroes is reflected in their church organizations, educational institutions, private clubs, and the whole range of social life. Although these class distinctions may rest upon what would seem to outsiders flimsy and inconsequential matters, they are the social realities of Negro life, and no amount of reasoning can rid his mind of them. Recently we were informed in Dr. Herskovits' book on the Negro that color is the basis of social distinctions. To an outsider or a superficial observer, this would seem true; but when one probes the tissue of the Negro's social life he finds that the Negro reacts to the same illusions that feed the vanity of white men.

What are some of the marks of distinction which make it impossible to treat the Negro group as a homogeneous mass? They are chiefly property, education, and blood or family. If those possessing these marks of distinction are generally mulattoes, it is because the free Negro class who first acquired these things as well as a family tradition were of mixed blood. The church in Charleston, South Carolina, which was reputed not to admit blacks did not open its doors to nameless mulatto nobodies. Not only has the distinction of blood given certain Negro groups a feeling of superiority over other Negroes, but it has made them feel superior to "poor whites." The Negro's feeling of superiority to "poor whites" who do not bear in their veins "aristocratic" blood has always created a barrier to any real sympathy between the two classes. Race consciousness to be sure has constantly effaced class feeling among Negroes. Therefore we hear on every hand Negro capitalists supporting the right of the Negro worker to organize—against white capitalists, of course. Nevertheless class consciousness has never been absent.

The Negro's attitude towards economic values has been

determined by his economic position in American life. First of all, in the plantation system the Negro has found his adjustment to our economic system. The plantation system is based essentially upon enforced labor. Since emancipation the Negro has been a landless peasant without the tradition of the European peasant which binds the latter to the soil. Landownership remained relatively stationary from 1910 to 1920; while the number of landless workers increased. If this class of black workers were to espouse doctrines which aimed to change their economic status, they would be the most revolutionary group in America. From ignorant peasants who are ignorant in a fundamental sense in that they have no body of traditions even, we cannot expect revolutionary doctrines. They will continue a mobile group; while the white landlords through peonage and other forms of force will continue to hold them to the land.

Another factor of consequence in the Negro's economic life is the fact of the large number of Negroes in domestic service. One psychologist has sought to attribute this fact to the strength of the "instinct of submission" in the Negro. But it has represented an adjustment to the American environment. Nevertheless, it has left its mark on the Negro's character. To this is due the fact that he has taken over many values which have made him appear ridiculous and at the same time have robbed him of self-respect and self-reliance. This group is no more to be expected to embrace radical doctrines than the same class was expected to join slave insurrections, concerning which Denmark Vesey warned his followers: "Don't mention it to those waiting men who receive presents of old coats, etc., from their masters, or they'll betray us."

Even this brief consideration of the social situation which has determined the Negro's attitudes towards values in American life will afford a background for our discussion of the seeming anomaly which he presents to many spectators. We shall attempt to show that, while to most ob-

servers the Negro shows an apparent indifference to changing his status, this is in fact a very real and insistent stimulus to his struggles. The Negro can only envisage those things which have meaning for him. *The radical doctrines appeal chiefly to the industrial workers, and the Negro has only begun to enter industry.* For Negroes to enter industries which are usually in the cities and escape the confinement of the plantation, they have realized a dream that is as far beyond their former condition as the New Economic Order is beyond the present condition of the wage earner. It has often been observed that the Negro subscribes to all the canons of consumption as the owning class in the present system. Even here we find the same struggle to realize a status that he can envisage and has a meaning for him. Once the Negro struggled for a literary education because he regarded it as the earmark of freedom. The relatively segregated life which the Negro lives makes him struggle to realize the values which give status within his group. An automobile, a home, a position as a teacher, or membership in a fraternity may confer a distinction in removing the possessor from an inferior social status, that could never be appreciated by one who is a stranger to Negro life. Outsiders may wonder why a downtrodden, poor, despised people seem so indifferent about entering a struggle that is aimed to give all men an equal status. But if they could enter the minds of Negroes they would find that in the world in which they live they are not downtrodden and despised, but enjoy various forms of distinction.

An interesting episode in the life of the Negro which shows to what extent he is wedded to bourgeois ideals is the present attempt of the Pullman porters to organize. Some people have very superficially regarded this movement as a gesture in the direction of economic radicalism. But anyone who is intimately acquainted with the psychology of the Negro group, especially the porters, knows that this is far from true. One who is connected with the white labor

movement showed a better insight through his remark to the writer that the porters showed little working class psychology and showed a disposition to use their organization to enjoy the amenities of bourgeois social life. The Pullman porters do not show any disposition to overthrow bourgeois values. In fact, for years this group was better situated economically than most Negroes and carried over into their lives as far as possible the behavior patterns which are current in the middle class. In some places they regarded themselves as a sort of aristocracy, and as a colored woman said in one of their meetings recently, "Only an educated gentleman with culture could be a Pullman porter." The advent of a large and consequential professional and business class among Negroes has relegated the Pullman porters to a lower status economically as well as otherwise. Collective bargaining will help them to continue in a rôle in the colored group which is more in harmony with their conception of their relative status in their group. It is far from the idea of the Pullman porters to tear down the present economic order, and hardly any of them would confess any spiritual kinship with the "poor whites." The Pullman porters are emerging, on the other hand, as an aristocratic laboring group just as the Railroad Brotherhoods have done.

The Negro's lack of sympathy with the white working class is based on more than the feeling of superiority. In the South, especially, the caste system which is based on color, determines the behavior of the white working class. If the Negro has fatuously claimed spiritual kinship with the white bourgeois, the white working class has taken over the tradition of the slave-holding aristocracy. When white labor in the South attempts to treat with black labor, the inferior status of the latter must be conceded in practice and in theory. Moreover, white labor in the South not only has used every form of trickery to drive the Negro out of the ranks of skilled labor, but it has resorted to legislation to accomplish its aims. Experience, dating from before the

Civil War, with the white group, has helped to form the attitude of Negro towards white labor as well as traditional prejudices.[1]

In the February number of the *Southern Workman* there appears an article in which the psychology of the Negro is portrayed as follows. The discovery is made by a white business man in Chicago:

> The average working-class Negro in Chicago earns $22 a week. His wife sends her children to the Day Nursery or leaves them with relatives or friends, and she supplements the family income by from $10 to $15 or more per week. The average white man of the same class earns $33 per week and keeps his wife at home. This colored man will rent a $65 per month apartment and buy a $50 suit of clothes while the white man will occupy a $30 per month apartment and buy a $25 suit of clothes. This average white man will come into our store to buy furniture and about $300 will be the limit of his estimated purchase, while the colored man will undertake a thousand dollar purchase without the least thought about meeting the payments from his small income.

To the writer of the article the company's new policy in using colored salesmen is a wonderful opportunity for colored men to learn the furniture business. The furniture company is going to make Negroes better citizens, according to the author of the article, by encouraging them to have better homes. This situation represents not only the extent to which the average Negro has swallowed middle-class standards but the attitude of the upper-class Negro towards the same values.

There is much talk at the present time about the New Negro. He is generally thought of as the creative artist who is giving expression to all the stored-up æsthetic emotion of the race. Negro in Art Week has come to take its place beside, above, or below the other three hundred and fifty-two

[1] E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the Industrial South, The Nation.* Vol. 125, No. 3238.

weeks in the American year. But the public is little aware of the Negro business man who regards himself as a new phenomenon. While the New Negro who is expressing himself in art promises in the words of one of his chief exponents not to compete with the white man either politically or economically, the Negro business man seeks the salvation of the race in economic enterprise. In the former case there is either an acceptance of the present system or an ignoring of the economic realities of life. In the case of the latter there is an acceptance of the gospel of economic success. Sometimes the New Negro of the artistic type calls the New Negro business man a Babbitt, while the latter calls the former a mystic. But the Negro business man is winning out, for he is dealing with economic realities. He can boast of the fact that he is independent of white support, while the Negro artist still seeks it. One Negro insurance company in a rather cynical acceptance of the charge of Babbittry begins a large advertisement in a Negro magazine in the words of George F. Babbitt.

A perusal of Negro newspapers will convince anyone that the Negro group does not regard itself as outcasts without status. One cannot appeal to them by telling them that they have nothing to lose but their chains. The chains which Negroes have known in the South were not figurative. Negro newspapers are a good index of the extent to which middle-class ideals have captured the imagination of Negroes. In one newspaper there is a column devoted to What Society Is Wearing. In this column the apparel of those who are socially prominent is described in detail. The parties, the cars, the homes, and the jewelry of the élite find a place in all of these papers. In fact, there is no demand on the part of Negro leaders to tear down social distinctions and create a society of equals. As the writer heard a colored editor tell a white man recently, "the white people draw the line at the wrong point and put all of us in the same class."

Negro schools in the South furnish an example of the

influence of middle-class ideals which make Negroes appear in a ridiculous light. These schools give annually a public performance. Instead of giving plays such as Paul Green's folk plays of Negro life, they give fashion shows which have been popularized to boost sales. Negro students appear in all kinds of gorgeous costumes which are worn by the leisured middle class. One more often gets the impression that he has seen a Mardi Gras rather than an exhibition of correct apparel.

Even the most ardent radical cannot expect the Negro to hold himself aloof from the struggle for economic competence and only dream of his escape from his subordinate economic status in the overthrow of the present system. A Negro business man who gets out of the white man's kitchen or dining room rightly regards himself as escaping from economic slavery. Probably he will maintain himself by exploiting the Negro who remains in the kitchen, but he can always find consolation in the feeling, that if he did not exploit him a white man would. But in seeking escape from economic subordination, the Negro has generally envisaged himself as a captain of industry. In regard to group efficiency he has shown no concern. For example, a group isolated to the extent of the Negro in America could have developed cooperative enterprises. There has been no attempt in schools or otherwise to teach or encourage this type of economic organization. The idea of the rich man has been held up to him. More than one Negro business has been wrecked because of this predatory view of economic activity.

Many of those who criticize the Negro for selecting certain values out of American life overlook the fact that the primary struggle on his part has been to acquire a culture. In spite of the efforts of those who would have him dig up his African past, the Negro is a stranger to African culture. The manner in which he has taken over the American culture has never been studied in intimate enough detail to make it comprehensible. The educated

class among Negroes has been the forerunners in this process. Except, perhaps, through the church, the economic basis of the civilized classes among Negroes has not been within the group. Although today the growing professional and business classes are finding support among Negroes, the upper classes are subsidized chiefly from without. To some outsiders such a situation makes the Negro intellectual appear as merely an employee of the white group. At times the emasculating effect of Negro men appearing in the rôle of mere entertainers for the whites has appeared in all its tragic reality. But the creation of this educated class of Negroes has made possible the civilization of the Negro. It may seem conceivable to some that the Negro could have contended on the ground of abstract right for unlimited participation in American life on the basis of individual efficiency; but the Negro had to deal with realities. It is strange that today one expects this very class which represents the most civilized group to be in revolt against the system by which it was created, rather than the group of leaders who have sprung from the soil of Negro culture.

Here we are brought face to face with a fundamental dilemma of Negro life. Dean Miller at Howard University once expressed this dilemma aphoristically, namely, that the Negro pays for what he wants and begs for what he needs. The Negro pays, on the whole, for his church, his lodges and fraternities, and his automobile, but he begs for his education. Even the radical movement which had vogue a few years back was subsidized by the white radical group. It did not spring out of any general movement among Negroes towards radical doctrines. Moreover, black radicals theorized about the small number of Negroes who had entered industry from the security of New York City; but none ever undertook to enter the South and teach the landless peasants any type of self-help. What began as the organ of the struggling working masses became the mouthpiece of Negro capitalists. The New Negro group

which has shown a new orientation towards Negro life and the values which are supposed to spring from Negro life has restricted itself to the purely cultural in the narrow sense.

In his article the writer has attempted to set forth the social forces which have caused the Negro to have his present attitude towards the values in American life. From even this cursory glance at Negro life we are able to see to what extent bourgeois ideals are implanted in the Negro's mind. We are able to see that the Negro group is a highly differentiated group with various interests, and that it is far from sound to view the group as a homogeneous group of outcasts. There has come upon the stage a group which represents a nationalistic movement. This movement is divorced from any program of economic reconstruction. It is unlike the Garvey movement in that Garvey, through schemes—fantastic to be sure—united his nationalistic aims with an economic program. This new movement differs from the program of Booker Washington, which sought to place the culture of the Negro upon a sound basis by making him an efficient industrial worker. Nor does it openly ally itself with those leaders who condemn the organization of the Pullman porters and advise Negroes to pursue an opportunistic course with capitalism. It looks askance at the new rising class of black capitalism while it basks in the sun of white capitalism. It enjoys the congenial company of white radicals while shunning association with black radicals. The New Negro Movement functions in the third dimension of culture; but so far it knows nothing of the other two dimensions—Work and Wealth.

I INVESTIGATE LYNCHINGS

By WALTER WHITE

I

NOTHING contributes so much to the continued life of an investigator of lynchings and his tranquil possession of all his limbs as the obtuseness of the lynchers themselves. Like most boastful people who practice direct action when it involves no personal risk, they just can't help talk about their deeds to any person who manifests even the slightest interest in them.

Most lynchings take place in small towns and rural regions where the natives know practically nothing of what is going on outside their own immediate neighborhoods. Newspapers, books, magazines, theatres, visitors and other vehicles for the transmission of information and ideas are usually as strange among them as dry-point etchings. But those who live in so sterile an atmosphere usually esteem their own perspicacity in about the same degree as they are isolated from the world of ideas. They gabble on *ad infinitum,* apparently unable to keep from talking.

In any American village, North or South, East or West, there is no problem which cannot be solved in half an hour by the morons who lounge about the village store. World peace, or the lack of it, the tariff, sex, religion, the settlement of the war debts, short skirts, Prohibition, the carryings-on of the younger generation, the superior moral rectitude of country people over city dwellers (with a wistful eye on urban sins)—all these controversial subjects are disposed of quickly and finally by the bucolic wise men. When to their isolation is added an emotional fixation, such as the rural South has on the Negro, one can sense the

atmosphere from which spring the Heflins, the Ku Kluxers, the two-gun Bible-beaters, the lynchers and the anti-evolutionists. And one can see why no great amount of cleverness or courage is needed to acquire information in such a forlorn place about the latest lynching.

Professor Earle Fiske Young of the University of Southern California recently analyzed the lynching returns from fourteen Southern States for thirty years. He found that in counties of less than 10,000 people there was a lynching rate of 3.2 per 100,000 of population; that in those of from 10,000 to 20,000 the rate dropped to 2.4; that in those of from 20,000 to 30,000, it was 2.1 per cent; that in those of from 30,000 to 40,000, it was 1.7, and that thereafter it kept on going down until in counties with from 300,000 to 800,000 population it was only 0.05.

Of the forty-one lynchings and eight race riots I have investigated for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People during the past ten years, all of the lynchings and seven of the riots occurred in rural or semi-rural communities. The towns ranged in population from around one hundred to ten thousand or so. The lynchings were not difficult to inquire into because of the fact already noted that those who perpetrated them were in nearly every instance simple-minded and easily fooled individuals. On but three occasions were suspicions aroused by my too definite questions or by informers who had seen me in other places. These three times I found it rather desirable to disappear slightly in advance of reception committees imbued with the desire to make an addition to the lynching record. One other time the possession of a light skin and blue eyes (though I consider myself a colored man) almost cost me my life when (it was during the Chicago race riots in 1919) a Negro shot at me, thinking me to be a white man.

II

In 1918 a Negro woman, about to give birth to a child, was lynched with almost unmentionable brutality along with ten men in Georgia. I reached the scene shortly after the butchery and while excitement yet ran high. It was a prosperous community. Forests of pine trees gave rich returns in turpentine, tar and pitch. The small towns where the farmers and turpentine hands traded were fat and rich. The main streets of the largest of these towns were well paved and lighted. The stores were well stocked. The white inhabitants belonged to the class of Georgia crackers—lanky, slow of movement and of speech, long-necked, with small eyes set close together, and skin tanned by the hot sun to a reddish-yellow hue.

As I was born in Georgia and spent twenty years of my life there, my accent is sufficiently Southern to enable me to talk with Southerners and not arouse their suspicion that I am an outsider. (In the rural South hatred of Yankees is not much less than hatred of Negroes.) On the morning of my arrival in the town I casually dropped into the store of one of the general merchants who, I had been informed, had been one of the leaders of the mob. After making a small purchase I engaged the merchant in conversation. There was, at the time, no other customer in the store. We spoke of the weather, the possibility of good crops in the fall, the political situation, the latest news from the war in Europe. As his manner became more and more friendly I ventured to mention guardedly the recent lynchings.

Instantly he became cautious—until I hinted that I had great admiration for the manly spirit the men of the town had exhibited. I mentioned the newspaper accounts I had read and confessed that I had never been so fortunate as to see a lynching. My words or tone seemed to disarm his suspicions. He offered me a box on which to sit, drew up

another one for himself, and gave me a bottle of Coca-Cola.

"You'll pardon me, Mister," he began, "for seeming suspicious but we have to be careful. In ordinary times we wouldn't have anything to worry about, but with the war there's been some talk of the Federal government looking into lynchings. It seems there's some sort of law during wartime making it treason to lower the man power of the country."

"In that case I don't blame you for being careful," I assured him. "But couldn't the Federal government do something if it wanted to when a lynching takes place, even if no war is going on at the moment?"

"Naw," he said, confidently, obviously proud of the opportunity of displaying his store of information to one who he assumed knew nothing whatever about the subject. "There's no such law, in spite of all the agitation by a lot of fools who don't know the niggers as we do. States' rights won't permit Congress to meddle in lynching in peace time."

"But what about your State government—your Governor, your sheriff, your police officers?"

"Humph! Them? We elected them to office, didn't we? And the niggers, we've got them disfranchised, ain't we? Sheriffs and police and Governors and prosecuting attorneys have got too much sense to mix in lynching-bees. If they do they know they might as well give up all idea of running for office any more—if something worse don't happen to them—" This last with a tightening of the lips and a hard look in the eyes.

I sought to lead the conversation into less dangerous channels. "Who was the white man who was killed—whose killing caused the lynchings?" I asked.

"Oh, he was a hard one, all right. Never paid his debts to white men or niggers and wasn't liked much around here. He was a mean 'un all right, all right."

"Why, then, did you lynch the niggers for killing such a man?"

"It's a matter of safety—we gotta show niggers that they mustn't touch a white man, no matter how low-down and ornery he is."

Little by little he revealed the whole story. When he told of the manner in which the pregnant woman had been killed he chuckled and slapped his thigh and declared it to be "the best show, Mister, I ever did see. You ought to have heard the wench howl when we strung her up."

Covering the nausea the story caused me as best I could, I slowly gained the whole story, with the names of the other participants. Among them were prosperous farmers, business men, bankers, newspaper reporters and editors, and several law-enforcement officers.

My several days of discreet inquiry began to arouse suspicions in the town. On the third day of my stay I went once more into the store of the man with whom I had first talked. He asked me to wait until he had finished serving the sole customer. When she had gone he came from behind the counter and with secretive manner and lowered voice he asked, "You're a government man, ain't you?" (An agent of the Federal Department of Justice was what he meant.)

"Who said so?" I countered.

"Never mind who told me; I know one when I see him," he replied, with a shrewd harshness in his face and voice.

Ignorant of what might have taken place since last I had talked with him, I thought it wise to learn all I could and say nothing which might commit me. "Don't you tell anyone I am a government man; if I *am* one, you're the only one in town who knows it," I told him cryptically. I knew that within an hour everybody in town would share his "information."

An hour or so later I went at nightfall to the little but not uncomfortable hotel where I was staying. As I was about to enter a Negro approached me and, with an air of great mystery, told me that he had just heard a group of white men discussing me and declaring that if I remained

in the town overnight "something would happen" to me.

The thought raced through my mind before I replied that it was hardly likely that, following so terrible a series of lynchings, a Negro would voluntarily approach a supposedly white man whom he did not know and deliver such a message. He had been sent, and no doubt the persons who sent him were white and for some reason did not dare tackle me themselves. Had they dared there would have been no warning in advance—simply an attack. Though I had no weapon with me, it occurred to me that there was no reason why two should not play at the game of bluffing. I looked straight into my informant's eyes and said: "You go back to the ones who sent you and tell them this: that I have a damned good automatic and I know how to use it. If anybody attempts to molest me tonight or any other time, somebody is going to get hurt."

That night I did not take off my clothes nor did I sleep. Ordinarily in such small Southern towns everyone is snoring by nine o'clock. That night, however, there was much passing and re-passing of the hotel. I learned afterward that the merchant had, as I expected, told generally that I was an agent of the Department of Justice, and my empty threat had served to reinforce his assertion. The Negro had been sent to me in the hope that I might be frightened enough to leave before I had secured evidence against the members of the mob. I remained in the town two more days. My every movement was watched, but I was not molested. But when, later, it became known that not only was I not an agent of the Department of Justice but a Negro, the fury of the inhabitants of the region was unlimited—particularly when it was found that evidence I gathered had been placed in the hands of the Governor of Georgia. It happened that he was a man genuinely eager to stop lynching—but restrictive laws against which he had appealed in vain effectively prevented him from acting upon the evidence. And the Federal government declared itself unable to proceed against the lynchers.

III

In 1926 I went to a Southern State for a New York newspaper to inquire into the lynching of two colored boys and a colored woman. Shortly after reaching the town I learned that a certain lawyer knew something about the lynchers. He proved to be the only specimen I have ever encountered in much traveling in the South of the Southern gentleman so beloved by fiction writers of the older school. He had heard of the lynching before it occurred and, fruitlessly, had warned the judge and the prosecutor. He talked frankly about the affair and gave me the names of certain men who knew more about it than he did. Several of them lived in a small town nearby where the only industry was a large cotton mill. When I asked him if he would go with me to call on these people he peered out of the window at the descending sun and said, somewhat anxiously, I thought, "I will go with you if you will promise to get back to town before sundown."

I asked why there was need of such haste. "No one would harm a respectable and well-known person like yourself, would they?" I asked him.

"Those millhands out there would harm anybody," he answered.

I promised him we would be back before sundown—a promise that was not hard to make, for if they would harm this man I could imagine what they would do to a stranger!

When we reached the little mill town we passed through it and, ascending a steep hill, our car stopped in front of a house perched perilously on the side of the hill. In a yard stood a man with iron-gray hair and eyes which seemed strong enough to bore through concrete. The old lawyer introduced me and we were invited into the house. As it was a cold afternoon in late autumn the gray-haired man called a boy to build a fire.

I told him frankly I was seeking information about the

lynching. He said nothing but left the room. Perhaps two minutes later, hearing a sound at the door through which he had gone, I looked up and there stood a figure clad in the full regalia of the Ku Klux Klan. I looked at the figure and the figure looked at me. The hood was then removed and, as I suspected, it was the owner of the house.

"I show you this," he told me, "so you will know that what I tell you is true."

This man, I learned, had been the organizer and kleagle of the local Klan. He had been quite honest in his activities as a Kluxer, for corrupt officials and widespread criminal activities had caused him and other local men to believe that the only cure rested in a secret extra-legal organization. But he had not long been engaged in promoting the plan before he had the experience of other believers in Klan methods. The very people whose misdeeds the organization was designed to correct gained control of it. This man then resigned and ever since had been living in fear of his life. He took me into an adjoining room after removing his Klan robe and there showed me a considerable collection of revolvers, shot guns, rifles and ammunition.

We then sat down and I listened to as hair-raising a tale of Nordic moral endeavor as it has ever been my lot to hear. Among the choice bits were stories such as this: The sheriff of an adjoining county the year before had been a candidate for reëlection. A certain man of considerable wealth had contributed largely to his campaign fund, providing the margin by which he was reëlected. Shortly afterwards a married woman with whom the sheriff's supporter had been intimate quarreled one night with her husband. When the cuckold charged his wife with infidelity, the gentle creature waited until he was asleep, got a large butcher knife, and then artistically carved him up. Bleeding more profusely than a pig in the stock yards, the man dragged himself to the home of a neighbor several hundred yards distant and there died on the door-step. The

facts were notorious, but the sheriff effectively blocked even interrogation of the widow!

I spent some days in the region and found that the three Negroes who had been lynched were about as guilty of the murder of which they were charged as I was. Convicted in a court thronged with armed Klansmen and sentenced to death, their case had been appealed to the State Supreme Court, which promptly reversed the conviction, remanded the appellants for new trials, and severely criticized the judge before whom they had been tried. At the new trial the evidence against one of the defendants so clearly showed his innocence that the judge granted a motion to dismiss, and the other two defendants were obviously as little guilty as he. But as soon as the motion to dismiss was granted the defendant was rearrested on a trivial charge and once again lodged in jail. That night the mob took the prisoners to the outskirts of the town, told them to run, and as they set out pumped bullets into their backs. The two boys died instantly. The woman was shot in several places, but was not immediately killed. One of the lynchers afterwards laughingly told me that "we had to waste fifty bullets on the wench before one of them stopped her howling."

Evidence in affidavit form indicated rather clearly that various law enforcement officials, including the sheriff, his deputies, various jailers and policemen, three relatives of the then Governor of the State, a member of the State Legislature and sundry individuals prominent in business, political and social life of the vicinity, were members of the mob.

The revelation of these findings after I had returned to New York did not add to my popularity in the lynching region. Public sentiment in the State itself, stirred up by several courageous newspapers, began to make it uncomfortable for the lynchers. When the sheriff found things getting a bit too unpleasant he announced that he was going to ask the grand jury to indict me for "bribery and passing

for white." It developed that the person I was supposed to have paid money to for execution of an affidavit was a man I had never seen in the flesh, the affidavit having been secured by the reporter of a New York newspaper.

An amusing tale is connected with the charge of passing. Many years ago a bill was introduced in the Legislature of that State defining legally as a Negro any person who had one drop or more of Negro blood. Acrimonious debate in the lower house did not prevent passage of the measure, and the same result seemed likely in the State Senate. One of the Senators, a man destined eventually to go to the United States Senate on a campaign of vilification of the Negro, rose at a strategic point to speak on the bill. As the story goes, his climax was: "If you go on with this bill you will bathe every county in blood before nightfall. And, what's more, there won't be enough white people left in the State to pass it."

When the sheriff threatened me with an indictment for passing as white, a white man in the State with whom I had talked wrote me a long letter asking me if it were true that I had Negro blood. "You did not tell me nor any one else in my presence," he wrote, "that you were white except as to your name. I had on amber-colored glasses and did not take the trouble to scrutinize your color, but I really did take you for a white man and, according to the laws of ——, you may be." My informant urged me to sit down and figure out mathematically the exact percentage of Negro blood that I possessed and, if it proved to be less than one-eighth, to sue for libel those who had charged me with passing.

This man wrote of the frantic efforts of the whites of his State to keep themselves thought of as white. He quoted an old law to the effect that "it was not slander to call one a Negro because everybody could see that he was not; but it was slanderous to call him a mulatto."

IV

On another occasion a serious race riot occurred in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a bustling town of 100,000 inhabitants. In the early days Tulsa had been a lifeless and unimportant village of not more than five thousand people, and its Negro residents had been forced to live in what was considered the least desirable section of the village, down near the railroad. Then oil was discovered nearby and almost overnight the village grew into a prosperous town. The Negroes prospered along with the whites, and began to erect comfortable homes, business establishments, a hotel, two cinemas and other enterprises, all of these springing up in the section to which they had been relegated. This was, as I have said, down near the railroad tracks. The swift growth of the town made this hitherto disregarded land of great value for business purposes. Efforts to purchase the land from the Negro owners at prices far below its value were unavailing. Having built up the neighborhood and knowing its value, the owners refused to be victimized.

One afternoon in 1921 a Negro messenger boy went to deliver a package in an office building on the main street of Tulsa. His errand done, he rang the bell for the elevator in order that he might descend. The operator, a young white girl, on finding that she had been summoned by a Negro, opened the door of the car ungraciously. Two versions there are of what happened then. The boy declared that she started the car on its downward plunge when he was only halfway in, and that to save himself from being killed he had to throw himself into the car, stepping on the girl's foot in doing so. The girl, on the other hand, asserted that the boy attempted to rape her in the elevator. The latter story, at best, seemed highly dubious —that an attempted criminal assault would be made by any person in an open elevator of a crowded office build-

ing on the main street of a town of 100,000 inhabitants—and in open daylight!

Whatever the truth, the local press, with scant investigation, published lurid accounts of the alleged assault. That night a mob started to the jail to lynch the Negro boy. A group of Negroes offered their services to the jailer and sheriff in protecting the prisoner. The offer was declined, and when the Negroes started to leave the sheriff's office a clash occurred between them and the mob. Instantly the mob swung into action.

The Negroes, outnumbered, were forced back to their own neighborhood. Rapidly the news spread of the clash and the numbers of mobbers grew hourly. By daybreak of the following day the mob numbered around five thousand, and was armed with machine-guns, dynamite, rifles, revolvers and shotguns, cans of gasoline and kerosene, and—such are the blessings of invention!—airplanes. Surrounding the Negro section, it attacked, led by men who had been officers in the American army in France. Outnumbered and out-equipped, the plight of the Negroes was a hopeless one from the beginning. Driven further and further back, many of them were killed or wounded, among them an aged man and his wife, who were slain as they knelt at prayer for deliverance. Forty-four blocks of property were burned after homes and stores had been pillaged.

I arrived in Tulsa while the excitement was at its peak. Within a few hours I met a commercial photographer who had worked for five years on a New York newspaper and he welcomed me with open arms when he found that I represented a New York paper. From him I learned that special deputy sheriffs were being sworn in to guard the town from a rumored counter attack by the Negroes. It occurred to me that I could get myself sworn in as one of these deputies.

It was even easier to do this than I had expected. That evening in the City Hall I had to answer only three questions —name, age, and address. I might have been a thug, a

murderer, an escaped convict, a member of the mob itself which had laid waste a large area of the city—none of these mattered; my skin was apparently white, and that was enough. After we—some fifty or sixty of us—had been sworn in, solemnly declaring we would do our utmost to uphold the laws and constitutions of the United States and the State of Oklahoma, a villainous-looking man next to me turned and remarked casually, even with a note of happiness in his voice: "Now you can go out and shoot any nigger you see and the law'll be behind you."

As we stood in the wide marble corridor of the not unimposing City Hall waiting to be assigned to automobiles which were to patrol the city during the night, I noticed a man, clad in the uniform of a captain of the United States Army, watching me closely. I imagined I saw in his very swarthy face (he was much darker than I, but was classed as a white man while I am deemed a Negro) mingled inquiry and hostility. I kept my eye on him without appearing to do so. Tulsa would not have been a very healthy place for me that night had my race or my previous investigations of other race riots been known there. At last the man seemed certain he knew me and started toward me.

He drew me aside into a deserted corner on the excuse that he had something he wished to ask me, and I noticed that four other men, with whom he had been talking, detached themselves from the crowd and followed us.

Without further introduction or apology my dark-skinned, newly made acquaintance, putting his face close to mine and looking into my eyes with a steely, unfriendly glance, demanded challengingly:

"You say that your name is White?"

I answered affirmatively.

"You say you're a newspaper man?"

"Yes, I represent the New York ——. Would you care to see my credentials?"

"No, but I want to tell you something. There's an or-

ganization in the South that doesn't love niggers. It has branches everywhere. You needn't ask me the name—I can't tell you. But it has come back into existence to fight this damned nigger Advancement Association. We watch every movement of the officers of this nigger society and we're out to get them for putting notions of equality into the heads of our niggers down South here."

There could be no question that he referred to the Ku Klux Klan on the one hand and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the other. As coolly as I could, the circumstances being what they were, I took a cigarette from my case and lighted it, trying to keep my hand from betraying my nervousness. When he finished speaking I asked him:

"All this is very interesting, but what, if anything, has it to do with the story of the race riot here which I've come to get?"

For a full minute we looked straight into each other's eyes, his four companions meanwhile crowding close about us. At length his eyes fell. With a shrug of his shoulders and a half-apologetic smile, he replied as he turned away, "Oh, nothing, except I wanted you to know what's back of the trouble here."

It is hardly necessary to add that all that night, assigned to the same car with this man and his four companions, I maintained a considerable vigilance. When the news stories I wrote about the riot (the boy accused of attempted assault was acquitted in the magistrate's court after nearly one million dollars of property and a number of lives had been destroyed) revealed my identity—that I was a Negro and an officer of the Advancement Society—more than a hundred anonymous letters threatening my life came to me. I was also threatened with a suit for criminal libel by a local paper, but nothing came of it after my willingness to defend it was indicated.

V

A narrow escape came during an investigation of an alleged plot by Negroes in Arkansas to "massacre" all the white people of the State. It later developed that the Negroes had simply organized a coöperative society to combat their economic exploitation by landlords, merchants, and bankers, many of whom openly practiced peonage. I went as a representative of a Chicago newspaper to get the facts. Going first to the capital of the State, Little Rock, I interviewed the Governor and other officials and then proceeded to the scene of the trouble, Phillips county, in the heart of the cotton-raising area, close to the Mississippi.

As I stepped from the train at Elaine, the county seat, I was closely watched by a crowd of men. Within half an hour of my arrival I had been asked by two shopkeepers, a restaurant waiter, and a ticket agent why I had come to Elaine, what my business was, and what I thought of the recent riot. The tension relaxed somewhat when I implied I was in sympathy with the mob. Little by little suspicion was lessened and then, the people being eager to have a metropolitan newspaper give their side of the story, I was shown "evidence" that the story of the massacre plot was well-founded, and not very clever attempts were made to guide me away from the truth.

Suspicion was given new birth when I pressed my inquiries too insistently concerning the share-cropping and tenant-farming system, which works somewhat as follows: Negro farmers enter into agreements to till specified plots of land, they to receive usually half of the crop for their labor. Should they be too poor to buy food, seed, clothing and other supplies, they are supplied these commodities by their landlords at designated stores. When the crop is gathered the landowner takes it and sells it. By declaring that he has sold it at a figure far below the market price and by refusing to give itemized accounts of the supplies purchased during the year by the tenant, a landlord can (and in that

region almost always does) so arrange it that the bill for supplies always exceeds the tenant's share of the crop. Individual Negroes who had protested against such thievery had been lynched. The new organization was simply a union to secure relief through the courts, which relief those who profited from the system meant to prevent. Thus the story of a "massacre" plot.

Suspicion of me took definite form when word was sent to Phillips county from Little Rock that it had been discovered that I was a Negro, though I knew nothing about the message at the time. I walked down West Cherry Street, the main thoroughfare of Elaine, one day on my way to the jail, where I had an appointment with the sheriff, who was going to permit me to interview some of the Negro prisoners who were charged with being implicated in the alleged plot. A tall, heavy-set Negro passed me and, *sotto voce,* told me as he passed that he had something important to tell me, and that I should turn to the right at the next corner and follow him. Some inner sense bade me obey. When we had got out of sight of other persons the Negro told me not to go to the jail, that there was great hostility in the town against me and that they planned harming me. In the man's manner there was something which made me certain he was telling the truth. Making my way to the railroad station, since my interview with the prisoners (the sheriff and jailer being present), was unlikely to add anything to my story, I was able to board one of the two trains a day out of Elaine. When I explained to the conductor—he looked at me so inquiringly—that I had no ticket because delays in Elaine had given me no time to purchase one, he exclaimed, "Why, Mister, you're leaving just when the fun is going to start! There's a damned yaller nigger down here passing for white and the boys are going to have some fun with him."

I asked him the nature of the fun.

"Wal, when they get through with him," he explained grimly, "he won't pass for white no more."

OUR GREATEST GIFT TO AMERICA

By GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

On divers occasions some eloquent Ethiop arises to tell this enlightened nation about the marvelous contributions of his people to our incomparable civilization. With glib tongue or trenchant pen, he starts from the arrival of the nineteeen unfortunate dinges at Jamestown in 1619, or perhaps with the coming of the celebrated Columbus to these sacred shores with his Negro mate in 1492, and traces the multiple gifts of the black brethren to the present day. He will tell us of the vast amount of cotton picked by the Negro, of the hundreds of roads and levees the black laborers have constructed, of the miles of floors Negro women have scrubbed, and the acres of clothes they have washed, of the numerous wars in which, for some unknown reason, the Sambo participated, of the dances and cookery he invented, or of the spirituals and work songs composed by the sons of Ham and given to a none too grateful nation. The more erudite of these self-appointed spokesmen of the race will even go back to the Garden of Eden, the walls of Babylon, the pyramids of Egypt and the palaces of Ethiopia by way of introduction, and during their prefatory remarks they will not fail, often, to claim for the Negro race every person of importance that has ever resided on the face of the earth. Ending with a forceful and fervent plea for justice, equality, righteousness, humanitarianism, and other such things conspicuous in the world by their absence, they close amid a storm of applause from their sable auditors—and watch the collection plate.

This sort of thing has been going on regularly for the last century. No Negro meeting is a success without one

or more such encouraging addresses, and no Negro publication that fails to carry one such article in almost every issue is considered worthy of purchase. So general has the practice become that even white audiences and magazines are no longer immune. It has become not unusual in the past few years for the Tired Society Women's Club of Keokuk, Iowa, or the Delicatessen Proprietors' Chamber of Commerce or the Hot Dog Venders' Social Club to have literary afternoons devoted exclusively to the subject of the lowly smoke. On such occasions there will be some notable Aframerican speakers as Prof. Hambone of Moronia Institute or Dr. Lampblack of the Federal Society for the Exploitation of Lynching, who will eloquently hold forth for the better part of an hour on the blackamoor's gifts to the Great Republic and why, therefore, he should not be kept down. Following him there will usually be a soulful rendition by the Charcoal Singers of their selected repertoire of genuine spirituals, and then, mayhap one of the younger Negro poets will recite one of his inspiring verses anent a ragged black prostitute gnawing out her soul in the dismal shadows of Hog Maw Alley.

It was not so many years ago that Negro writers used to chew their fingernails and tear as much of their hair as they could get hold of, because the adamantine editors of white magazines and journals invariably returned unread their impassioned manuscripts in which they sought to tell how valuable the Aframerican had always been to his country and what a dirty shame it was to incinerate a spade without benefit of jury. Not so today, my friends. The swarms of Negro hacks and their more learned associates have at last come into their own. They have ridden into popular demand on the waves of jazz music, the Charleston, Mammy Songs and the ubiquitous, if intricate, Black Bottom. Pick up almost any of the better class periodicals of national note nowadays and you are almost sure to find a lengthy paper by some sable literatus on the Negro's gifts to America, on his amazing progress in becoming just like

other Americans in habit and thought, or on the horrible injustice of Jim Crow cars. The cracker editors are paying generously for the stuff (which is more than the Negro editors did in the old days), and as a result, the black scribblers, along with the race orators, are now wallowing in the luxury of four-room apartments, expensive radios, Chickering pianos, Bond Street habiliments, canvas-back duck, pre-war Scotch and high yellow mistresses.

All of which is very well and good. It is only natural that the peckerwoods, having become bored to death with their uninteresting lives, should turn to the crows for inspiration and entertainment. It is probably part of their widespread rationalization of the urge they possess to mix with the virile blacks. One marvels, however, that the principal contribution of our zigaboos to the nation has been entirely overlooked by our dusky literati and peripatetic platform prancers. None of them, apparently, has ever thought of it. While they have been ransacking their brains and the shelves of the public libraries for new Negro gifts of which to inform their eager listeners at so much per word or per engagement, they have ignored the principal gift sprawling everywhere about them. They had but to lift their eyes from the pages of their musty tome and glance around. But they didn't.

"And what," I can hear these propagandists feverishly inquiring with poised fountain pens and notebooks, "is this unchronicled contribution to the worth of our nation?" Well, I am not unwilling to divulge this "secret" that has been all too apparent to the observing. And though the brownish intelligentsia are now able to pay for the information—and probably willing to do so—I modestly ask nothing, save perhaps a quart of decent rye or possibly one of the numerous medals shoveled out every year to deserving coons. Hence, like all of the others, I now arise, flick a speck off my dinner jacket, adjust my horn-rimmed nose glasses, and, striking an attitude, declaim the magic word: Flattery!

Yes folks, the greatest gift we have made to America is flattery. Flattery, if you please, of the buckra majority; inflation of the racial ego of the dominant group by our mere proximity, by our actions and by our aspirations. "How come?" I am belligerently and skeptically quizzed, and very indulgently I elucidate. Imitation, some one has said, is the sincerest flattery. It is quite human to be pleased and feel very important when we are aped and imitated. Consider how we Negroes shove out our chests when an article appears in an enterprising darky newspaper from the pen of some prominent African chief saying that his dingy colleagues on the Dark Continent look to their American brethren, with their amazing progress, for inspiration. How sweet is flattery, the mother of pride. And pride, we have been told, is absolutely essential to progress and achievement. If all of this be true of the dark American, how much truer must it be of the pink American? By constant exposure to his energetic propagandists in press, on platform and in pulpit, the colored brother has forged ahead—to borrow an expression from the *Uplift*—until he can now eat with Rogers silver off Haviland china, sprawl on overstuffed couches and read spicy literature under the glow of ornate floor lamps, while the strains of "Beer Bucket Blues" are wafted over the radio. This is generally known as progress. Now if the downtrodden Negro, under the influence of his flattering propagandists, has been able to attain such heights of material well-being, is it any wonder that the noble rednecks have leaped so much farther up the scale of living when surrounded by millions of black flatterers, both mute and vocal? Most certainly not.

Look, for example, at Isadore Shankersoff. By hook or by crook (probably the latter) he grabbed off enough coin of his native land to pay his passage to America. In Russia he was a nobody—hoofed by everybody—the mudsill of society. Quite naturally his inferiority complex was Brobdingnagian. Arriving under the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, he is still Isadore Shankersoff, the prey of sharpers

and cheap grafters, but now he has moved considerably higher in the social scale. Though remaining mentally adolescent, he is no longer at the bottom; he is a white man! Over night he has become a member of the superior race. Ellis Island marked his metamorphosis. For the first time in his life he is better than somebody. Without the presence of the blackamoor in these wonderfully United States, he would still know himself for the thick-pated underling that he is, but how can he go on believing that when America is screaming to him on every hand that he is a white man, and as such entitled to certain rights and privileges forbidden to Negro scientists, artists, clergymen, journalists, and merchants. One can understand why Isadore walks with firmer tread.

Or glance at Cyrus Leviticus Dumbell. He is of Anglo-Saxon stock that is so old that it has very largely gone to seed. In the fastnesses of the Blue Ridge Mountains his racial strain has been safely preserved from pollution by black and red men, for over two hundred years. Thus he is a stalwart fellow untouched by thrift or education. Cy finally tires of the bushes and descends to one of the nearby towns. There he finds employment in a mill on a twelve-hour shift. The company paternalistically furnishes him everything he needs and thoughtfully deducts the cost regularly from his slender pay envelope, leaving him about two dollars for corn liquor and moving pictures. Cy has never had cause to think himself of any particular importance in the scheme of things, but his fellow workers tell him differently. He is a white man, they say, and therefore divinely appointed to "keep the nigger down." He must, they insist, protect white womanhood and preserve white supremacy. This country, he learns, is a white man's country, and although he owns none of it, the information strikes him not unpleasantly. Shortly he scrapes together ten dollars, buys Klan regalia, and is soon engaged in attending midnight meetings, burning crosses, repeating ritual from the Kloran, flogging erring white womanhood

for the greater purity of Anglo-Saxondom, and keeping vigilantly on the lookout for uppish and offensive zigaboos to lynch. Like the ancient Greeks and Romans, he now believes himself superior to everybody different from him. Nor does the presence of Jim Crow institutions on every hand contribute anything toward lessening that belief. Whatever his troubles may be, he has learned from his colleagues and the politicians, to blame it all on the dark folks, who are, he is now positive, without exception his inferiors.

Think, also, of demure little Dorothy Dunce. For twelve years she attended the palatial public school. Now, at eighteen, having graduated, she is about to apply her Latin, Greek, English literature, ancient history, geometry and botany to her everyday work as packer in a spaghetti factory. When she was very young, before she entered the kindergarten, her indulgent parents used to scare her by issuing a solemn warning that a big, black nigger would kidnap her if she wasn't a good little girl. Now that she has had American popular education turned loose upon her, she naturally believes differently: *i.e.,* that every big, burly, black nigger she meets on a dark street is ready to relieve her by force of what remains of her virtue. A value is placed upon her that she would not have in Roumania, Scotland, Denmark, or Montenegro. She is now a member of that exalted aggregation known as pure, white womanhood. She is also confident of her general superiority because education has taught her that Negroes are inferior, immoral, diseased, lazy, unprogressive, ugly, odoriferous, and should be firmly kept in their place at the bottom of the social and industrial scale. Quite naturally she swells with race pride, for no matter how low she falls, she will always be a white woman.

But enough of such examples. It is fairly well established, I think, that our presence in the Great Republic has been of incalculable psychological value to the masses of white citizens. Descendants of convicts, serfs and half-wits, with

the rest have been buoyed up and greatly exalted by being constantly assured of their superiority to all other races and their equality with each other. On the stages of a thousand music halls, they have had their vanity tickled by blackface performers parading the idiocies of mythical black roustabouts and rustics. Between belly-cracking guffaws they have secretly congratulated themselves on the fact that they are not like these buffoons. Their books and magazines have told them, or insinuated, that morality, beauty, refinement and culture are restricted to Caucasians. On every hand they have seen smokes endeavoring to change from black to white, and from kinky hair to straight, by means of deleterious chemicals, and constantly they hear the Negroes urging each other to do this and that "like white folks." Nor do the crackers fail to observe, either, that pink epidermis is as highly treasured among blacks as in Nordic America, and that the most devastating charge that one Negro can make against another is that "he acs just like a nigger." Anything excellent they hear labeled by the race conscious Negroes as "like white folks," nor is it unusual for them, while loitering in the Negro ghetto, to hear black women compared to Fords, mulatto women to Cadillacs and white women to Packards. With so much flattery it is no wonder that the Caucasians have a very high opinion of themselves and attempt to live up to the lofty niche in which the Negroes have placed them. We should not marvel that every white elevator operator, school teacher and bricklayer identifies himself with Shakespeare, Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, Newton, Edison, Wagner, Tennyson, and Rembrandt as creators of this great civilization. As a result we have our American society, where everybody who sports a pink color believes himself to be the equal of all other whites by virtue of his lack of skin pigmentation, and his classic Caucasian features.

It is not surprising, then, that democracy has worked better in this country than elsewhere. This belief in the equality of all white folks—making skin color the gauge

of worth and the measure of citizenship rights—has caused the lowest to strive to become among the highest. Because of this great ferment, America has become the Utopia of the material world; the land of hope and opportunity. Without the transplanted African in their midst to bolster up the illusion, America would have unquestionably been a very different place; but instead the shine has served as a mudsill upon which all white people alike can stand and reach toward the stars. I submit that here is the gift par excellence of the Negro to America. To spur ten times our number on to great heights of achievement; to spare the nation the enervating presence of a destructive social caste system, such as exists elsewhere, by substituting a color caste system that roused the hope and pride of teeming millions of ofays—this indeed is a gift of which we can well be proud.

EXTRACTS FROM

FIFTY YEARS OF NEGRO CITIZENSHIP

By CARTER G. WOODSON

THE citizenship of the Negro in this country is a fiction. The Constitution of the United States guarantees to him every right vouchsafed to any individual by the most liberal democracy on the face of the earth, but despite the unusual powers of the Federal Government, this agent of the body politic has studiously evaded the duty of safeguarding the rights of the Negro. The Constitution confers upon Congress the power to declare war and make peace, to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises; to coin money, to regulate commerce, and the like; and further empowers Congress "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof." After the unsuccessful effort of Virginia and Kentucky, through their famous resolutions of 1798 drawn up by Jefferson and Madison to interpose State authority in preventing Congress from exercising its powers, the United States Government with Chief Justice John Marshall as the expounder of that document, soon brought the country around to the position of thinking that, although the Federal Government is one of enumerated powers, that government and not that of States is the judge of the extent of its powers and, "though limited in its powers, is supreme within its sphere of action." [1] Marshall showed, too, that "there is no phrase in

[1] McCulloch *v.* Maryland, 4 Wheaton, 416.

the instrument which, like the Articles of Confederation, excludes incidental or implied powers; and which requires that everything granted shall be expressly and minutely described." [2] Marshall insisted, moreover, "that the powers given to the government imply the ordinary means of execution," and "to imply the means necessary to an end is generally understood as implying any means, calculated to produce the end and not as being confined to those single means without which the end would be entirely unattainable." [3] He said: "Let the end be legitimate, let it be within the scope of the Constitution, and all means which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited, but consist with the letter and the spirit of the Constitution, are constitutional."

Fortified thus, the Constitution became the rock upon which nationalism was built and by 1833 there were few persons who questioned the supremacy of the Federal Government, as did South Carolina with its threats of nullification. Because of the beginning of the intense slavery agitation not long thereafter, however, and the division of the Democratic party into a national and proslavery group, the latter advocating State's rights to secure the perpetuation of slavery, there followed a reaction after the death of John Marshall in 1835, when the court abandoned to some extent the advanced position of nationalism of this great jurist and drifted toward the localism long since advocated by Judge Roane of Virginia.

In making the national government the patron of slavery, a new sort of nationalism as a defense of that institution developed thereafter, however, and culminated in the Dred Scott decision.[4] To justify the high-handed methods to protect the master's property right in the bondman, these jurists not only referred to the doctrines of Marshall already set forth above but relied also upon the decisions of

[2] McCulloch *v.* Maryland, 4 Wheaton, 416.
[3] *Ibid.*, 416.
[4] Dred Scott *v.* Sanford, 19 Howard, 399.

Justice Storey, the nationalist surviving Chief Justice Marshall. They believed with Storey that a constitution of government founded by the people for themselves and their posterity and for objects of the most momentous nature—for perpetual union, for the establishment of justice, for the general welfare and for a perpetuation of the blessings of liberty—necessarily requires that every interpretation of its powers have a constant reference to those objects. No interpretation of the words in which those powers are granted can be a sound one which narrows down every ordinary import so as to defeat those objects.

In the decision of Prigg *v.* Pennsylvania, when the effort was to carry out the fugitive slave law,[5] the court, speaking through Justice Storey in 1842, believed that the clause of the Constitution conferring a right should not be so construed as to make it shadowy or unsubstantial or leave the citizen without the power adequate for its protection when another construction equally accordant with the words and the sense in which they were used would enforce and protect the right granted. The court believed that Congress is not restricted to legislation for the execution of its expressly granted powers; but for the protection of rights guaranteed by the Constitution, may employ such means not prohibited, as are necessary and proper, or such as are appropriate to attain the ends proposed. The court held, moreover, in Prigg *v.* Pennsylvania, that "the fundamental principle applicable to all cases of this sort, would seem to be, that when the end is required the means are given; and when the duty is enjoined, the ability to perform it is contemplated to exist on the part of the functionaries to whom it is entrusted." It required very little argument to expose the fallacy in supposing that the national government had ever meant to rely for the due fulfillment of its duties and the rights which it established, upon State legislation rather than upon that of the United States, and with greater reason, when one bears in mind that the execution of

[5] 16 Peters, 539, 612.

power which was to be the same throughout the nation could not be confided to any State which could not rightfully act beyond its own territorial limits. All of this power exercised in executing the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 was implied, rather than such direct power as that later conferred upon Congress by the Thirteenth Amendment, which provided that Congress should have power to pass appropriate legislation to enforce it.

As the Supreme Court decided in the case of Prigg *v.* Pennsylvania that the officers of the State were not legally obligated to assist in the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, Congress passed another and a more drastic measure in 1850 which, although unusually rigid in its terms, was enthusiastically supported by the Supreme Court in upholding the slavery régime. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 deprived the Negro suspect of the right of a trial by jury to determine the question of his freedom in a competent court of the State. The affidavit of the person claiming the Negro was sufficient evidence of ownership. This law made it the duty of marshals and of the United States courts to obey and execute all warrants and precepts issued under the provisions of this Act. It imposed a penalty of a fine and imprisonment upon any person knowingly hindering the arrest of a fugitive or attempting to rescue one from custody or harboring one or aiding one to escape. The writ of habeas corpus was denied to the reclaimed Negro and the Act was *ex post facto*. In short, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 committed the whole country to the task of the protection of slave property and made slavery a national matter with which every citizen in the country had to be concerned. In the interest of the property right of the master, moreover, the Supreme Court by the Dred Scott Decision[6] upheld this measure feeling that there was in Congress adequate power expressly given and implied to enforce this regulation in spite of any local opposition that there might develop against the govern-

[6] Dred Scott *v.* Sanford, 19 Howard 399.

ment acting upon individuals to carry out this police regulation. The Negro was not a citizen and in his non-political status could not sue in a Federal court, which for the same reason must disclaim jurisdiction in a case in which the Negro was a party.

In the decision of Ableman *v.* Booth,[7] the court in construing the provision for the return of slaves according to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 further recognized the master's right of property in his bondman, the right of assisting and recovering him regardless of any State law or regulation or local custom to the contrary whatsoever. This tribunal then believed that the right of the master to have his fugitive slave delivered up on the claim, being guaranteed by the Constitution, the implication was that the national government was clothed with proper authority and functions to enforce it. These were reversed during the Civil War by the nation rising in arms against the institution of slavery which it had economically outgrown and the court in the support of the Federal Government exercising its unusual powers in effecting the political and social upheaval resulting in the emancipation of the slaves, again became decidedly national in its decisions.

Out of Rebellion the Negro emerged a free man endowed by the State and Federal Government with all the privileges and immunities of a citizen in accordance with the will of the majority of the American people, as expressed in the Civil Rights Bill and in the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. A decidedly militant minority, however, willing to grant the Negro freedom of body but unwilling to grant him political or civil rights, bore it grievously that the race had been so suddenly elevated and soon thereafter organized a party of reaction to reduce the freedmen to the position of the free people of color, who before the Civil War had no rights but that of exemption from involuntary servitude. During the Reconstruction period when the Negroes

[7] 21 Howard, 506.

figured conspicuously in the rebuilding of the Southern States they temporarily enjoyed the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution. As there set in a reaction against the support of the reconstructed governments as administered by corrupt Southerners and interlopers, the support which the United States Government had given this first effort in America toward actual democracy was withdrawn and the undoing of the Negro as a citizen was easily effected throughout the South by general intimidation and organized mobs known as the Ku Klux Klan.

One of the first rights denied the Negro by these successful reactionaries was the unrestricted use of common carriers. Standing upon its former record, however, the court had sufficient precedents to continue as the impartial interpreter of the laws guaranteeing all persons civil and political equality. In New Jersey Steam Navigation Company *v.* Merchants Bank,[8] the court speaking through Justice Nelson took high ground in the defense of the free and unrestricted use of common carriers, a right frequently denied the Negroes after the Civil War. The court said that a common carrier is "in the exercise of a sort of public office and has public duties to perform from which he should not be permitted to exonerate himself without assent of the parties concerned." This doctrine was upheld in Munn *v.* Illinois,[9] and in Olcott *v.* Supervisors,[10] when it was decided that railroads are public highways established under the authority of the State for the public use; and that they are none the less public highways, because controlled and owned by private corporations; that it is a part of the function of government to make and maintain highways for the convenience of the public; that no matter who is agent or what is the agency, the function performed is *that of the State;* that although the owners may be private companies, they may be compelled to permit the public to

[8] 6 Howard, 344.
[9] 94 U. S., 113.
[10] 16 Wall., 678.

use these works in the manner in which they can be used; "Upon these grounds alone," continues the opinion, "have courts sustained the investiture of railroad corporations with the States right of eminent domain, or the right of municipal corporations, under legislative authority, to assess, levy, and collect taxes to aid in the construction of railroads." [11] Jurists in this country and in England had also held that inasmuch as the innkeeper is engaged in a quasi public employment the law gives him special privileges and he is charged with certain duties and responsibilities to the public. The public nature of his employment would then forbid him from discriminating against any person asking admission, on account of the race or color of that person.[12]

In the Slaughter House Cases [13] and Strauder *v.* West Virginia [14] the United States Supreme Court held that since slavery was the moving or principal cause of the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment, and since that institution rested wholly upon the inferiority, as a race, of those held in bondage, their freedom necessarily involved immunity from, and protection against all discrimination against them, because of their race. Congress, therefore, under its present express power to enforce that amendment by appropriate legislation, might enact laws to protect that people against deprivation, *because of their race,* of any civil rights granted to other freemen in the same States; and such legislation may be of a direct and primary character, operating upon States, their officers and agents, and also upon, at least, such individuals and corporations as exercise public functions and wield power and authority under the State.

[11] This was held in Township of Queensburg *v.* Culver (19 Wall., 83), in Township of Pine Grove *v.* Talcott (19 Wall., 666), and in Massachusetts in Worcester *v.* Western R. R. Corporation (4 Met., 564).

[12] Storey on Bailments, Sec., 475-6, and Rex. *v.* Ivens, 7 Carrington & Payne, 213; 32, E.C.L., 495.

[13] 16 Wall., 36.

[14] 100 U. S., 303.

The State was conceded the power to regulate rates, fares of passengers and freight, and upon these grounds it might regulate the entire management of railroads in matters affecting the convenience and safety of the public, such as regulating speed, compelling stops of prescribed length at stations and prohibiting discriminations and favoritisms. The position taken here is that these corporations are actual agents of the State and what the State permits them to do is an act of the State. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments made the Negro race a part of the public and entitled to share in the control and use of public utilities. Any restriction in the use of these utilities would deprive the race of its liberty; for "personal liberty consists," says Blackstone, "in the power of locomotion, of changing situation, of removing one's person to whatever places one's own inclination may direct, without restraint, unless by due course of law."

In several decisions the court had held that the purpose of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments was to raise the Negro race from that condition of inferiority and servitude in which most of them had previously stood, into perfect equality of civil rights with all other persons within the jurisdiction of the United States. In Strauder *v.* West Virginia,[15] and Neal *v.* Delaware,[16] the court had taken the position that exemption from race discrimination is a right of a citizen of the United States. Negroes charged that members of their race had been excluded from a jury because of their color. The court was then of the opinion that such action contravened the Constitution and, as was held in the case of Prigg *v.* Pennsylvania, declared it essential to the national supremacy that the agent of the body politic should have the power to enforce and protect any right granted by the Constitution.

In *Ex Parte Virginia* the position was the same. In this case one Cole, a county judge, was charged by the laws

[15] 100 U. S., 306.
[16] 103 U. S., 386.

of Virginia with the duty of selecting grand and petit jurors. The laws of that State did not permit him in the performance of that duty to make any distinction as to race. He was indicted in a Federal court under the Act of 1875, for making such discriminations. The attorney-general of Virginia contended that the State had done its duty, and had not authorized or directed that county judge to do what he was charged with having done; that the State had not denied to the Negro race the equal protection of the laws; and that consequently the act of Cole must be deemed his individual act, in contravention of the will of the State. Plausible as this argument was, it failed to convince the court, and after emphasizing the fact that the Fourteenth Amendment had reference to the acts of the political body denominated a State, "by whatever instruments or in whatever modes that action may be taken" and that a State acts by its legislative, executive and judicial authorities, and can act in no other way, it said:

"The constitutional provision, therefore, must mean that no agency of the State, or of the officers or agents by whom its powers are exerted shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. Whoever, by virtue of public position under a State government, deprives another of property, life, or liberty without due process of law, or denies or takes away the equal protection of the laws, violates the constitutional inhibitions; and, as he acts under the name and for the State, and is clothed with the State power, his act is that of the State. This must be so, or the constitutional prohibition has no meaning. Then the State has clothed one of its agents with power to annul or evade it. But the constitutional amendment was ordained for a purpose. It was to secure equal rights to all persons, and to insure to all persons the enjoyment of such rights, power was given to Congress to enforce its provisions by appropriate legislation. Such legislation must act upon persons, not upon the abstract thing denominated as State, but upon the persons

who are the agents of the State, in the denial of the rights which were intended to be secured." [17]

The Supreme Court of the United States soon fell under reactionary influence and gave its judicial sanction to all repression necessary to establish permanently the reactionaries in the South and to deprive the Negroes of their political and civil rights. It will be interesting, therefore, to show exactly how far the United States Supreme Court, supposed to be an impartial tribunal and generally held in such high esteem and treated with such reverential fear, has been guilty of inconsistency and sophistry in its effort to support the autocracy in defiance of the well-established principles of interpretation for construing the constitutions and laws of States and in utter disregard of the supremacy of Congress in the exercise of the powers granted the government by the Constitution of the United States.

The Right of Locomotion

In 1875 Congress passed a measure commonly known as the Civil Rights Bill, which was supplementary of other measures of the same sort, the first being enacted April 9, 1866,[18] and reënacted with some modifications in sections 16, 17, and 18 of the Enforcement Act passed August 31, 1870.[19] The intention of the statesmen advocating these measures was to secure to the freedmen the enjoyment of every right guaranteed all other citizens. The important sections of the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 follow:

Section 1. That all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theatres, and other places of public amusement; subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law, and applicable alike to citizens

[17] *Ex Parte Virginia,* 100 U. S., 346-7.
[18] 14 Statutes, 27, Chapter 31.
[19] 16 Statutes, 140, Chapter 114.

of every race and color, regardless of any previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. That any person who shall violate the foregoing section by denying to any citizen, except for reasons by law applicable to citizens of every race and color, and regardless of any previous condition of servitude, the full enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges in said section enumerated, or by aiding or inciting such denial, shall for every such offense forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred dollars to the person aggrieved thereby, to be recovered in an action of debt, with full costs; and shall also, for every such offense be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction therefor, shall be fined not less than five hundred nor more than one thousand dollars, or shall be imprisoned not less than thirty days nor more than one year. *Provided*, That all persons may elect to sue for the penalties aforesaid, or to proceed under their rights at common law and by State statutes; and having so elected to proceed in the one mode or the other, their right to proceed in the other jurisdiction shall be barred. But this provision shall not apply to criminal proceedings, either under this act or the criminal law of any State; and provided further, That a judgment for the penalty in favor of the party aggrieved, or a judgment upon an indictment, shall be a bar to either prosecution, respectively.

Although the Negroes by this measure were guaranteed the rights which were granted by the Constitution to every citizen of the United States, the members of the Supreme Court of the United States instead of upholding the laws of the nation in accordance with their oaths undertook to hedge around and to explain away the articles of the Constitution in such a way as to legislate rather than interpret the laws according to the intent of the framers of the polls. In the courts, in inns, in hotels, on street cars, and on railroads, Negroes had sued for redress of their grievances and the persons thus called upon to respond in the courts attacked the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Bill, and the War Amendments, contending that they encroached upon the police power of the States.

The first of these Civil Rights Cases were: United States *v.* Stanley, United States *v.* Ryan, United States *v.* Nichols, United States *v.* Singleton, and Robinson and Wife *v.* Memphis and Charleston R.R. Co. Two of these cases, those against Stanley and Nichols, were indictments for denying to persons of color the accommodations of inn or hotel; two of them, those against Ryan and Singleton, were, one on information, the other on indictments, for denying to individuals the privileges and accommodations of a theatre. The information against Ryan was for refusing a colored person a seat in the dress circle of McGuire's Theater in San Francisco; and the indictment against Singleton was for denying to another person, whose color was not stated, the full enjoyment of the accommodation of the theatre known as the Grand Opera House in New York.

The argument to show the culpability of the State was that in becoming a business man or a corporation established by sanction of and protected by the State, such a person or persons discriminating against a citizen of color no longer acted in a private but in a public capacity and in so doing affected an interest in violation of the State by controlling, as in the case of slavery, an individual's power of locomotion. The Civil Rights Bill was appropriate legislation as defined by the Constitution to forbid any action by private persons which "in the light of our history may reasonably be apprehended to tend, on account of its being incidental to quasi public occupations, to create an institution." The Act of 1875 in prohibiting persons from violating the rights of other persons to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations of inns and public conveyances, for any reason turning merely upon the race or color of the latter, partook of the specific character of certain contemporaneous, solemn and effective action by the United States to which it was a sequel and is constitutional.

Giving the opinion of the court in Civil Rights Cases,[20] Mr. Justice Bradley said that the Fourteenth Amendment

[20] 109 U. S., 1.

on which this Act of 1875 rested for its authority, if it had any authority at all, does not invest Congress with the power to legislate within the domain of State legislation or in State action of the kind referred to in the Civil Rights Act. He believed that the Fourteenth Amendment does not authorize Congress to create a code of municipal law for the regulation of private rights. He conceded that positive rights and privileges are secured by the Fourteenth Amendment but only by prohibition against State laws and State proceedings affecting those rights.[21] "Until some State law has passed," he said, "or some State action through its officers or agents has been taken, adverse to the rights of citizens sought to be protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, no legislation of the United States under said amendment, nor any proceeding under such legislation, can be called into activity; for the prohibitions of the amendment are against State laws and acts under State authority." Otherwise Congress would take the place of State legislatures and supersede them and regulate all private rights between man and man. Civil rights such as are guaranteed by the Constitution against State aggression, thought Justice Bradley, cannot be impaired by the wrongful acts of individuals unsupported by State authority in the shape of laws, customs, or executive proceedings, for those are private wrongs.

Justice Bradley believed, moreover, that the Civil Rights Act could not be supported by the Thirteenth Amendment in that, unlike the Fourteenth Amendment, the Thirteenth Amendment is primary and direct in abolishing slavery. "When a man has emerged from slavery," said he, "and by the aid of beneficent legislation has shaken off the inseparable concomitants of that State there must be some stage in the progress of his elevation when he takes the rank of a mere citizen, ceases to be the special favorite of the laws, and when his rights as a citizen or a man, are

[21] United States *v.* Cruikshank, 92 U. S., 542; Virginia *v.* Rives, 100 U. S., 318; *Ex Parte Virginia,* 100 U. S., 339.

to be protected in the ordinary modes by which other men's rights are protected." To eject a Negro from an inn or a hotel, to compel him to ride in a separate car, to deny him access and use of places maintained at public expense, according to Justice Bradley, do not constitute imposing upon the Negroes badges and incidents of slavery; for they are acts of individuals with which Congress, because of the limited powers of the Federal government, cannot have anything to do. The particular clause in the Civil Rights Act, so far as it operated on individuals in the several States was, therefore, held null and void, but the court held that it might apply to the District of Columbia and territories of the United States for which Congress might legislate directly. Since then the court has in the recent Wright Case declared null and void even that part which it formerly said might apply to territory governed directly by Congress, thus taking the position tantamount to reading into the laws of the United States and the laws of nations the segregation measures of a mediæval ex-slaveholding commonwealth assisted by the nation in enforcing obedience to its will beyond the three-mile limit on the high seas.

Although conceding that the Thirteenth Amendment was direct and primary legislation, the court held that it had nothing to do with the guarantee against that race discrimination commonly referred to in the bills of complaint as the badges and incidents of slavery. The court found the Fourteenth Amendment negative rather than direct and primary because of one of its clauses providing that "no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty and property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The court was too evasive or too stupid to observe that the first clause of this amendment was an affirmation to the effect that all persons born and naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdic-

tion thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. In other words, the court held that if there is one negative clause in a paragraph, the whole paragraph is a negation. Such sophistry deserves the condemnation of all fair-minded people, when one must conclude that any person even without formal education, if he has heard the English language spoken and is of sound mind, would know better than to interpret a law so unreasonably.

In declaring this act unconstitutional the Supreme Court of the United States violated one of its own important principles of interpretation to the effect that this duty is such a delicate one, that the court in declaring a statute of Congress invalid must do so with caution, reluctance and hesitation and never until the duty becomes manifestly imperative. In the decision of Fletcher *v.* Peck,[22] the court said that whether the legislative department of the government has transcended the limits of its constitutional power is at all times a question of much delicacy, which seldom, if ever, is to be decided in the affirmative, in a doubtful case. The position between the Constitution and the law should be such that the judge feels a clear and strong conviction of their incompatibility with each other. In the Sinking Fund Cases[23] the court said: "When required in the regular course of judicial proceedings to declare an act of Congress void if not within the legislative power of the United States, this declaration should never be made except in a clear case. Every possible presumption is in favor of the validity of a statute, and this continues until the contrary is shown beyond a rational doubt. One branch of the government cannot encroach on the domain of another without danger. The safety of our institutions depends in no small degree on a strict observance of this salutary rule." And this is exactly what happened. The judiciary here assumed the function of the legislative de-

[22] 6 Cranch, 128.
[23] 99 U. S., 418.

partment. Not even a casual reader on examining these laws and the Constitution can feel that the court in this case felt such a clear and strong conviction as to the invalidity of this constitutional legislation when that tribunal, as its records show, had under different circumstances before the Civil War held a doctrine decidedly to the contrary.

Mr. Justice Harlan, therefore, dissented. He considered the opinion of the court narrow, as the substance and spirit were sacrificed by a subtle and ingenious verbal criticism. Justice Harlan believed, "that it is not the words of the law but the internal sense of it that makes the law; the letter of the law is the body, the sense and reason of the law the soul." "Constitutional provisions adopted in the interest of liberty," said Justice Harlan, "and for the purpose of securing, through national legislation, if need be, rights inhering in a state of freedom, and belonging to American citizenship, have been so construed as to defeat the end the people desire to accomplish, which they attempted to accomplish, and which they supposed they had accomplished, by changes in their fundamental law."

The court, according to Justice Harlan, although he did not mean to say that the determination in this case should have been materially controlled by considerations of mere expediency or policy, had departed from the familiar rule requiring that the purpose of the law or Constitution and the objects to be accomplished by any grant are often the most important in reaching real intent just as the debates in the convention of 1787 and the discussions in the *Federalist* and in the ratifying conventions of the States have often been referred to as throwing important light on clauses in the Constitution seeming to show ambiguity. The debates on the war amendment, when they were proposed and ratified, were thoroughly expounded before the court in bringing before that tribunal the intention of the members of Congress, by which the court, according to a well established principle of interpretation, should

have been influenced in construing the statute in question.

The court held that legislation for the enforcement of the Thirteenth Amendment is direct and primary, "but to what specific ends may it be directed?" inquired Justice Harlan. The court "had uniformly held that national government has the power, whether expressly given or not, to secure and protect rights conferred or guaranteed by the Constitution." [24] Justice Harlan believed then that the doctrines should not be abandoned when the inquiry was not as to an implied power to protect the master's rights, but what Congress might, under powers expressly granted, do for the protection of freedom and the rights necessarily inhering in a state of freedom.

The Thirteenth Amendment, the court conceded, did more than prohibit slavery as an *institution,* resting upon distinctions of race, and uphold by positive law. The court admitted that it "established and decreed universal civil freedom throughout the United States." "But did the freedom thus established," inquired Justice Harlan, "involve more than exemption from actual slavery? Was nothing more intended than to forbid one man from using another as property? Was it the purpose of the nation simply to destroy the institution and then remit the race, theretofore held in bondage, to the several States for such protection, in their civil rights, necessarily growing out of their freedom, as those States in their discretion might choose to provide? Were the States against whose protest the institution was destroyed to be left free, so far as national interference was concerned, to make or allow discriminations against that race, as such, in the enjoyment of those fundamental rights which by universal concession, inhere in a state of freedom?" Justice Harlan considered it indisputable that Congress in having power to abolish slavery could destroy the burdens and disabilities remaining as its badges

[24] United States *v.* Reese, 92 U. S., 214; Strauder *v.* West Virginia, 100 U. S., 303.

and incidents which constitute its substance in visible form.

The court in its defense had taken as an illustration that the negative clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was not direct and primary, that although the States are prohibited from passing laws to impair the obligations of contract, this did not mean that Congress could legislate for the general enforcement of contracts throughout the States. Discomfiting his brethren on their own ground Harlan said: "A prohibition upon a State is not a *power in Congress or in the national government.* It is simply a *denial* of *power* to the State. The much talked-of illustration of impairing the obligation of contracts, therefore, is not an example of power expressly conferred in contradistinction to that of this case and is not convincing, for this would be a court matter, not a matter of Congress. The Fourteenth Amendment is the first case of conferring upon Congress affirmative power by *legislation to enforce* an express prohibition on the States. Judicial power could have acted without such a clause. The Fourteenth Amendment is not merely a prohibition on State action. It made Negroes citizens of the United States and of the States. This is decidedly affirmative. This citizenship may be protected not only by the judicial branch of the government but by Congressional legislation of a primary or direct character. It is in the power of Congress to enforce the affirmative as well as the prohibitive provisions of this article. The acceptance of any doctrine to the contrary," continued Justice Harlan, "would lead to this anomalous result: that whereas prior to the amendments, Congress with the sanction of this court passed the most stringent laws—operating directly and primarily upon States and their officers and agents, as well as upon individuals—in vindication of slavery and the right of the master, it may not now, by legislation of a like primary and direct character, guard, protect, and secure the freedom established, and the most essential right of the citizenship granted, by the constitutional amendments."

It did not seem to Justice Harlan that the fact that, by the second clause of the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment, the States are expressly prohibited from making or enforcing laws abridging the rights and immunities of citizens of the United States, furnished any sufficient reason for upholding or maintaining that the amendment was intended to deny Congress the power, by general, primary, and direct legislation, of protecting citizens of the several States, being also citizens of the United States, against all discrimination, in respect of their rights as citizens, which is founded on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." "Such an interpretation," thought he, "is plainly repugnant to its fifth section, conferring upon Congress power, by appropriate legislation, to enforce not merely the provisions containing prohibitions upon the States, but all of the provisions of the amendment, including the provisions, express and implied, in the first clause of the first section of the article granting citizenship." The prohibition of the State laws could have been negatived by judicial interpretation without the Fourteenth Amendment on the ground that they would have conflicted with the Constitution.

The court said the Fourteenth Amendment was not intended to enact a municipal code for the States. No one will gainsay this. This amendment, moreover, is not altogether for the benefit of the Negro. It simply interferes with the local laws when they operate so as to discriminate against persons or permit agents of the States to discriminate against persons of any race on account of color or previous condition of servitude. Of what benefit was it if it did not do this? The constitutions of the several States had already secured all persons against deprivation of life, liberty or property otherwise than by due process of law, and in some form recognized the right of all persons to the equal protection of the laws. If this be the correct interpretation even, it does not follow that privileges which have been granted by the nation, may not be protected by

primary legislation upon the part of Congress. Justice Harlan pointed out that it is for Congress, not the judiciary, to say that legislation is appropriate, for that would be sheer usurpation of the functions of a coördinate department. Why should these rules of interpretation be abandoned in the case of maintaining the rights of the Negro guaranteed by the Constitution?

The Civil Rights Act of 1875 could have been maintained on the ground that it regulated interstate passenger traffic, as one of the cases, Robinson and Wife *v.* Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company, showed that Robinson, a citizen of Mississippi, had purchased a ticket entitling him to be carried from Grand Junction, Tennessee, to Lynchburg, Virginia. This case substantially presented the question of interstate commerce, but the court reserved the question whether Congress in the exercise of its power to regulate commerce among the several States, might or might not pass a law regulating rights in public conveyances passing from one State to another. The court undertook to hide behind the fact that this specific act did not recite therein that it was enacted in pursuance of the power of Congress to regulate commerce. Justice Harlan, therefore, inquired: "Has it ever been held that the judiciary should overturn a statute, because the legislative department did not accurately recite therein the particular provision of the Constitution authorizing its enactment?" On the whole, the contrary is the rule. It is sufficient to know that there is authority in the Constitution.

In this decision, too, there was the influence of the much-paraded bugbear of social equality forced upon the whites. To use the inns, hotels, and parks, established by authority of the government and the places of amusement authorized as the necessary stimulus to progress, to buy a railroad ticket at the same window, ride in the same comfortable car on a limited train rather than incur the loss of time and suffer the inconvenience of inferior accommodations on a slow local train; to sleep and eat in a Pullman car so

as to be refreshed for business on arriving at the end of a long journey, all of this was and is today dubbed by the reactionary courts social equality. Justice Harlan exposed this fallacy in saying: "The right, for instance, of a colored citizen to use the accommodations of a public highway, upon the same terms as are permitted to white citizens, is no more a social right than his right, under the law, to use the public market, or a post office, or his right to sit in a public building with others, of whatever race, for the purpose of hearing the political questions of the day discussed."

What did the Negro become when he was freed? What was he when, according to section 2 of Article IV of the Constitution, he became by virtue of the Fourteenth Amendment entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States? [25] From what did the race become free? If Justice Bradley had been inconveniently segregated by common carriers, driven out of inns and hotels with the sanction of local law, and deprived by a mob of the opportunity to make a living, would he have considered himself a free citizen of this or any other country? "A colored citizen of Ohio or Indiana while in the jurisdiction of Tennessee," contended Justice Harlan, "is entitled to enjoy any privilege or immunity, fundamental in citizenship, which is given to citizens of the white race in the latter State. Citizenship in this country necessarily imports at least equality of civil rights among citizens of every race in the same State." In United States *v.* Cruikshank,[26] it was held that rights of life and personal liberty are natural rights of man, and that "equality of the rights of citizens is a principle of republicanism."

On the whole, however, the United States Supreme Court has not yet had the moral courage to face the issue

[25] Ward *v.* Maryland, 12 Wall, 418; Corfield *v.* Coryell, 4 Washington, D. C., 371; Paul *v.* Virginia, 8 Wall, 168; Slaughter House cases, *Ibid.*, 36.

[26] 92 U. S., 542.

in cases involving the constitutional rights of the Negro. Not a decision of that tribunal has yet set forth a straightforward opinion as to whether the States can enact one code of laws for the Negroes and another for the other elements of our population in spite of the fact that the Constitution of the United States prohibits such iniquitous legislation. In cases in which this question has been frankly put the court has wiggled out of it by some such declaration as that the case was improperly brought, that there were defects in the averments, or that the court lacked jurisdiction.

In the matter of jurisdiction the United States Supreme Court has been decidedly inconsistent. This tribunal at first followed the opinion of Chief Justice John Marshall in the case of Osborn *v.* United States Bank [27] that "when a question to which the judicial power of the United States is extended by the Constitution forms an ingredient of the original cause it is in the power of Congress to give the Circuit Courts the jurisdiction of that cause, although other questions of fact or of law may be involved." Prior to the rise of the Negro to the status of so-called citizenship the court built upon this decision the prerogative of examining all judicial matters pertaining to the Federal Government until it made itself the sole arbiter in all important constitutional questions and became the bulwark of nationalism. After some reaction the court resumed that position in all of its decisions except those pertaining to the Negro; for in the recent commercial expansion of the country involving the litigation of unusually large property values, the United States Supreme Court has easily found grounds for jurisdiction where economic rights are concerned; but just as easily disclaims jurisdiction where human rights are involved in cases in which Negroes happen to be complainants.

The fair-minded man, the patriot of foresight, observes, therefore, with a feeling of disappointment this prostitution

[27] 9 Wheaton, 738.

of an important department of the Federal Government to the use of the reactionary forces in the United States endeavoring to whittle away the essentials of the Constitution which guarantees to all persons in this country all the rights enjoyed under the most progressive democracy on earth. Since the Civil War the United States Supreme Court instead of performing the intended function of preserving the Constitution by democratic interpretation, has by its legislative decisions practically stricken therefrom so many of its liberal provisions and read into the Constitution so much caste and autocracy that discontent and radicalism have developed almost to the point of eruption.

DOMINANT FORCES IN RACE RELATIONS

By THOMAS DABNEY

The progress of race relations in America—especially in the South—is of intense interest and value to the student of sociological phenomena. Here is ample material for a critical study of the interplay of social forces in human relations. Here are abundant facts for a scientific appraisal of the relative influence of dominant forces in race relations. The subject borders on every phase of sociological research, and can easily be utilized as a basis for a synthetic sociology.

Most treatises dealing with race relations, while interesting and stimulating, are merely descriptive or narrative. Writers in this field have confined their efforts largely to the consideration of surface manifestations. Few authors have fathomed the depth of race relations where primary dynamic forces are exercising a determining influence on the race problem. This can be explained by the fact that America as yet has developed no penetrating, coördinating mind in the field of sociological interpretation.

It is the writer's contention that race relations are the product of economic phenomena just as are literature, art, philosophy, religion, ethics, morality and politics. Another force of considerable influence on race relations is the sex instinct. Economic phenomena, however, are the chief and most determining forces in race relations. The progress and direction of changes in race relations proceed in harmony with the underlying economic interests of the two races. Race relations form a mirror which reflects these economic interests. There is no effective permanent altruistic spirit between the Negro race and the white race save that which

is in harmony with the common material needs of the races.

There is, of course, in the progress of race relations a period of maladjustment which remains fairly constant. Groups do not readily recognize their common interests. The slow reaction of the human mind prevents a hundred per cent adjustment to the immediate requirements of social situations. The cultural lag always presents a problem; and in the sphere of race relations it is perhaps more evident than anywhere else in human relations. With regard to race relations there are many forces which impede the progress of adjustment. Race prejudice, traditions, false education and sectionalism becloud the issue, and unscrupulous, selfish groups, like politicians and capitalists, often take advantage of this unfortunate situation and encourage misunderstanding and confusion between the races for their personal gain. These last are the chief forces that aggravate the race problem.

In general, however, race relations are the product of definite economic systems. As an economic system develops, each trend exercises a dominant influence on race relations. This is due to the fact that economic trends disturb old class and race lines and break down race cleavage. New alignments must be made on the basis of new relations.

The culture of the old slave-holding South was the product of feudalism. Race relations were fashioned in harmony with the strict class divisions of the feudalistic system. Feudalism rests upon a landed nobility with aristocratic titles and a landless population of serfs and slaves. This economic situation required a racial psychology and justification. As a process of subtle propaganda, false education and cheap rationalization, the slave régime sought to justify the enslavement of the Negro and to perpetuate the slave system. The slave owners popularized the theory of the inherent superiority of the white races—meaning, of course, the slave-holding aristocracy. They invoked the aid of scientists to prove their dictum. Hence the popularization

of the hereditary hypothesis in the South and America regarding race differences.

It is perfectly natural that a racial psychology, such as is outlined in the foregoing paragraph, should have developed in the slave-holding South. It was the inevitable outcome of the situation of slaves and masters of poor whites and aristocrats. The natural relation of master and slave obtained throughout the feudal South. At the top there was the land-owning aristocratic class, and at the bottom of the social scale were the Negro slaves and poor whites, with the lackeys and professional classes in the middle. This situation was characterized by disrespect, jealousy, suspicion and hatred between Negroes and whites. On the surface, plantation life often seemed peaceful and normal. Yet the smouldering fires of race hate and suspicion occasionally burst forth and there followed insurrections and revolts among the most daring slaves. Such were the insurrections of Gabriel, Nat Turner, and Denmark Vesey.

The Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves precipitated positive antagonism between the races. The freedmen desired liberty and the wage relations. The old master class desired slavery and the human-property relations. But a new economic system was slowly developing in the South. The early social psychology of the master class fashioned in harmony with the class divisions and social lines of the old feudalistic order could not so quickly adjust itself to the changing status of the former slaves under the new economic and political conditions. The poor whites who had accepted the creed of the master class regarding the inherent superiority of the white race were thrown into closer competition with the Negroes. Thus the ensuing confusion resultant from a temporary maladjustment between the workers of both races increased suspicion and antagonisms between them. The aristocrats and poor whites smarted under the short *post-bellum* rule of the Negro and carpetbaggers. Both united to oppose the advance of the bour-

geoisie symbolized in the military rulers of the South and their puppets, called scalawags and carpet-baggers.

The hostility of the old master class to the onward sweep of capitalism and the movement to liberate the slaves is exemplified in the formidable movement of the former to end the autocratic rule established by Northern military authorities. The adherents of feudalism hated alike the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the enfranchisement of the newly emancipated slaves. Consequently, the old master classes, thwarted on every side by impenetrable forces, resorted to secrecy and illegal methods to regain their power. In this attempt the poor whites were their faithful allies. Temporary common interests had forced them to unite; and this situation was rendered more convincing by the subtle propaganda and the passionate appeals to the poor whites by the old régime. Social equality became an absorbing issue overnight, with the sex question as the focus of attention. Thus the sex impulse united with the more determining forces of economics in controlling race relations in the first reconstruction of the South. Superimposed upon decaying feudalism arose the Ku Klux Klan, an emergency organization to stem the tide of rising capitalism. A reign of terror ensued throughout the Southland which greatly increased bitterness and hatred between the races.

Reconstruction literature is replete with accounts of the struggle between the races. Novels and plays of that period reveal the old master class as longing for the "good old days." Political and literary leaders of the feudal South appealed to the masses to rally to the defense of the old order. Political demagogues and literary conservatives never tired of glorifying the old feudalistic régime. To them it was the *sine qua non* of human existence and slavery was the God-ordained status of the Negro.

The economic philosophy of the old South is revealed in its concept of race relations. Southern political ideals likewise bear the imprint of the old economic philosophy. These political ideals are embodied in the concept of States' rights,

a rationalized political theory fashioned to serve the economic interests of the old feudal South. Jefferson Davis, John C. Calhoun, and A. H. Stevens were the leading exponents of the States' rights theory. In literature, Thomas Dixon, Jr., Thomas Nelson Page, and Tom Watson were the leading representatives of the old South. These leaders represented the conservative antagonistic attitude of the old order regarding race relations. This racial psychology was the inevitable outcome of the old slave system.

The political struggles of the reconstruction period harked back to the economic past of the South. The Democratic party, representing the feudalistic order, sought to regain in the domain of politics what the South had lost in battle. By means of the Black Code, the Vagrancy laws and the Tissue ballot the South attempted to restore the old relations between the former master class and the newly emancipated slaves. Throughout the reconstruction period the chief issue in Southern politics was the Negro question. Practically every political problem was considered with reference to its possible effect upon Negro advancement. It is evident that this attitude was superficial and unwise; and it can be explained only on the basis that feudalism could not countenance any political action or legislation which ignored class divisions and race lines.

By 1890, the South had changed considerably in its racial psychology. A small but vigorous group was assuming leadership in racial and economic affairs. Advancing capitalism had prepared the basis for a new attitude by breaking race lines in a general leveling process of the Southern population. Only the most critical-minded and the most intelligent Southerners, however, were fully cognizant of the swift economic changes through which the South was passing. They alone realized the potency of these economic forces; and they did not hesitate to advocate new alignments in harmony with these changes. Thus, Henry M. Grady, one of the first prophets of the South, said in New York in 1886: "There was a South of slavery and secession. That

South is dead." Again in Augusta in 1887 he said: "In her industrial growth the South is daily making new friends. Every dollar of Northern money invested in the South gives us a new friend in that section." And finally he declared in Boston in 1889: "When will the black man cast a free ballot? When the Northern laborer casts a vote uninfluenced by his employer." These three statements are strikingly significant. They summarize the economic changes of the South from the decaying of feudalism to the ripening of capitalism. But Henry Grady was far ahead of most of his contemporaries.

Despite the levelling down of social classes in the South by the advance of capitalism, Southern politics had made practically no progress at the beginning of the twentieth century. Southern whites, divided on economic interests, nevertheless remained more or less united in politics. The one-party system prevailed with only small, weak opposition. Politics, therefore, had become uninteresting, superficial and static. Since there were no vital issues, politics degenerated into vulgar personal feuds between unscrupulous, ambitious candidates. Often these candidates resorted to cheap, superficial propaganda against the Negro in an attempt to enhance their favor with the ignorant poor whites. Occasionally, social equality for the Negro was the only issue.

Since 1900 industrialization has made great gains in the South. Large industrial cities have developed. The city proletariat has rapidly increased. As a result the old class lines are dissolving. New class lines are being formed. And the old race lines are merging into these new class lines as an outcome of the new common economic interests of certain groups of Negroes and whites. The old aristocratic class with its sweet memories of a slave-holding ancestry has well-nigh passed. Immediate, every-day problems of work and wages are pressing for solution. Slowly but surely the superficial questions of race and color are fading into insignificance before the concrete vital questions of eco-

nomic interests. Romanticism as expressive of feudalism is giving way to realism as symbolic of capitalism.

As a result of these economic changes a new racial psychology is developing in the South. This trend is exhibited in recent Southern literature on race relations. At first this new racial psychology was crude and vague and still sectionalistic in its essence. These characteristics were revealed in the books of Edgar Gardner Murphy and W. D. Weatherford. In his *The Basis of Ascendency,* Murphy wrote:

"In the long run our political prescriptions in America are always defeated by forces deeper than those of external inhibitions, by the realities of inherent right and power as these have obtained between man and man—by that ignorance and helplessness in one because of which he cannot rule (no matter by what manner we may exalt him nor how low the obeisance we may make to him) and by that interest and aptitude in another because of which he cannot be enslaved."

The foregoing lines of Murphy were written in amplification of the central theme of his book. This central idea was that "forces deeper than those of external inhibition" were preventing the success of any racial alignments set up to enslave the Negro whether in politics, education or industry. In another part of his book he discussed this central idea as the indivisible heritage. Even on the question of racial integrity, Murphy sounded a new note. Concerning this problem he wrote:

"The impulses of desertion from the life and destiny of the Negro race are moving within its lower rather than within its higher levels . . . Negro life can pass into the life of another race by the open way of social acceptance and reciprocity, but the underground passage of vice and complicity is always open to him.

"The arch enemies of race integrity are those white men who have become strident opponents of Negro development.

"You cannot found integrity of one race in the aversions of

another race . . . the remedy is, therefore, not perpetuation of repression, but opportunity."

In the same group which Murphy and Dr. Weatherford led were Mrs. L. H. Hammond and Mrs. B. B. Mumford. These Southerners represented the professional reformist group. Their attitude toward the Negro was paternalistic, the characteristic trait of the professional social uplifter.

The newer group in the South is led by the representatives of the Commission for Interracial Co-operation. The representatives of the newer South are Dr. Howard W. Odum, Dr. Edwin Mims, Guy B. Johnson, Gerald Johnson, Robert E. Eleayer, Will Alexander, Ashby Jones, Julian Harris, John Eagan, Walter Hines Page, James Boyd, Dubose Heyward, Julia Peterkin, and James Branch Cabell. Of special significance is the newer trend in Southern literature dealing with the problems of the South and the Negro. Walter Hines Page wrote, for example:

"We must look forward to a golden age that we may surely help to bring about, not back to one that never was."

And Clarence Poe, with a keen insight for social interpretation, says:

"The whole tragic system in the South is the outgrowth of our idea that labor is degrading—we must either have the Negro trained or we must not have him at all—our economic law knows no color line."

The feudal South used to boast of knowing the Negro. It assigned the Negro the status of a slave and then developed a set of rationalizations to justify its conduct. The newer South is represented by the critical school.

While this new literature contains opposing and different points of view, its general trend toward liberalism and objectification is plainly evident. It heralds a new day for the South. It is indicative of the rise of liberalism out of the chaos of defunct feudalism. It is the result of the economic

orientation of Southern life. And with these new alignments on the basis of material interests, Negro-white relations are undergoing vast and swift changes. The enemy of the South is he who closes his eyes to these facts and allows himself to be guided by the traditions of a bygone age. The friend of the South is he who studies present-day Southern life critically and objectively and who supports interracial co-operation on the basis of the immediate material interests of the two races.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

I AM now at the beginning of the year 1836, when the mind naturally occupies itself with the mysteries of life in all its phases—the ideal, the real, and the actual. Sober people look both ways at the beginning of a new year, surveying the errors of the past, and providing against the possible errors of the future. I, too, was thus exercised. I had little pleasure in retrospect, and the future prospect was not brilliant. "Notwithstanding," thought I, "the many resolutions and prayers I have made in behalf of freedom, I am, this first day of the year 1836, still a slave, still wandering in the depths of a miserable bondage. My faculties and powers of body and soul are not my own, but are the property of a fellow mortal in no sense superior to me, except that he has the physical power to compel me to be owned and controlled by him. By the combined physical force of the community I am his slave—a slave for life." With thoughts like these I was chafed and perplexed, and they rendered me gloomy and disconsolate. The anguish of my mind cannot be written.

At the close of the year, Mr. Freeland renewed the purchase of my services of Mr. Auld for the coming year. His promptness in doing so would have been flattering to my vanity had I been ambitious to win the reputation of being a valuable slave. Even as it was, I felt a slight degree of complacency at the circumstance. It showed him to be as well pleased with me as a slave as I with him as a master. But the kindness of the slave-master only gilded the chain, it detracted nothing from its weight or strength. The thought that men are made for other and better uses than slavery, throve best under the gentle treatment of a kind master. Its grim visage could assume no smiles able to fas-

cinate the partially enlightened slave into a forgetfulness of his bondage, or of the desirableness of liberty.

I was not through the first month of my second year with the kind and gentlemanly Mr. Freeland before I was earnestly considering and devising plans for gaining that freedom which, when I was but a mere child, I had ascertained to be the natural and inborn right of every member of the human family. The desire for this freedom had been benumbed while I was under the brutalizing dominion of Covey, and it had been postponed and rendered inoperative by my truly pleasant Sunday School engagements with my friends during the year at Mr. Freeland's. It had, however, never entirely subsided. I hated slavery ALWAYS, and my desire for freedom needed only a favorable breeze to fan it to a blaze at any moment. The thought of being only a creature of the PRESENT and the PAST troubled me, and I longed to have the FUTURE—a future with hope in it. To be shut up entirely to the past and present is to the soul whose life and happiness is unceasing progress—what the prison is to the body—a blight and a mildew, a hell of horrors. The dawning of this, another year, awakened me from my temporary slumber, and roused into life my latent but long-cherished aspiration for freedom. I became not only ashamed to be contented in slavery, but ashamed to SEEM to be contented, and in my present favorable condition under the mild rule of Mr. Freeland I am not sure that some kind reader will not condemn me for being overambitious, and greatly wanting in humility, when I say the truth, that I now drove from me all thoughts of making the best of my lot, and welcomed only such thoughts as led me away from the house of bondage. The intensity of my desire to be free, quickened by my present favorable circumstances, brought me to the determination to ACT as well as to think and speak.

Accordingly, at the beginning of this year 1836, I took upon me a solemn vow, that the year which had just now dawned upon me should not close without witnessing an

earnest attempt, on my part, to gain my liberty. This vow only bound me to make good my own individual escape, but my friendship for my brother-slaves was so affectionate and confiding that I felt it my duty, as well as my pleasure, to give them an opportunity to share in my determination. Toward Henry and John Harris I felt a friendship as strong as one man can feel for another, for I could have died with and for them. To them, therefore, with suitable caution, I began to disclose my sentiments and plans, sounding them the while on the subject of running away, provided a good chance should offer. I need not say that I did my VERY BEST to imbue the minds of my dear friends with my own views and feelings. Thoroughly awakened now, and with a definite vow upon me, all my little reading which had any bearing on the subject of human rights was rendered available in my communications with my friends. That gem of a book, the Columbian Orator, with its eloquent orations and spicy dialogues denouncing oppression and slavery—telling what had been dared, done, and suffered by men, to obtain the inestimable boon of liberty,—was still fresh in my memory, and whirled into the ranks of my speech with the aptitude of well-trained soldiers going through the drill. I here began my public speaking. I canvassed with Henry and John the subject of slavery, and dashed against it the condemning brand of God's eternal justice. My fellow-servants were neither indifferent, dull, nor inapt. Our feelings were more alike than our opinions. All, however, were ready to act when a feasible plan should be proposed. "Show us how the thing is to be done," said they, "and all else is clear."

We were all, except Sandy, quite clear from slave-holding priestcraft. It was in vain that we had been taught from the pulpit at St. Michaels the duty of obedience to our masters; to recognize God as the author of our enslavement; to regard running away as an offense, alike against God and man; to deem our enslavement a merciful and beneficial arrangement; to esteem our condition in this country a par-

adise to that from which we had been snatched in Africa; to consider our hard hands and dark color as God's displeasure, and as pointing us out as the proper subjects of slavery; that the relation of master and slave was one of reciprocal benefits; that our work was not more serviceable to our masters than our master's thinking was to us. I say it was in vain that the pulpit of St. Michaels had constantly inculcated these plausible doctrines. Nature laughed them to scorn. For my part, I had become altogether too big for my chains. Father Lawson's solemn words of what I ought to be, and what I might be in the providence of God, had not fallen dead on my soul. I was fast verging toward manhood, and the prophecies of my childhood were still unfulfilled. The thought that year after year had passed away, and my best resolutions to run away had failed and faded, that I was still a slave, with chance for gaining my freedom diminished and still diminishing—was not a matter to be slept over easily. But here came a trouble. Such thoughts and purposes as I now cherished could not agitate the mind long without making themselves manifest to scrutinizing and unfriendly observers. I had reason to fear that my sable face might prove altogether too transparent for the safe concealment of my hazardous enterprise. Plans of great moment have leaked through stone walls, and revealed their projectors. But here was no stone wall to hide my purpose. I would have given my poor tell-tale face for the immovable countenance of an Indian, for it was far from proof against the daily searching glances of those whom I met.

It was the interest and business of slaveholders to study human nature, and the slave nature in particular, with a view to practical results; and many of them attained astonishing proficiency in this direction. They had to deal not with earth, wood, and stone, but with MEN; and by every regard they had for their safety and prosperity they had need to know the material on which they were to work. So much intellect as the slaveholder had round him required

watching. Their safety depended on their vigilance. Conscious of the injustice and wrong they were every hour perpetrating, and knowing what they themselves would do if they were victims of such wrongs, they were constantly looking out for the first signs of dread retribution. They watched, therefore, with skilled and practiced eyes, and learned to read, with great accuracy, the state of mind and heart of the slave through his sable face. Unusual sobriety, apparent abstraction, sullenness, and indifference,—indeed, any mood out of the common way,—afforded ground for suspicion and inquiry. Relying on their superior position and wisdom, they would often hector the slave into a confession by affecting to know the truth of their accusations. "You have got the devil in you, and we'll whip him out of you," they would say. I have often been put thus to the torture on bare suspicion. This system had its disadvantages as well as its opposite—the slave being sometimes whipped into a confession of offenses which he never committed. It will be seen that the good old rule, "A man is to be held innocent until proved to be guilty," did not hold good on the slave plantation. Suspicion and torture were the approved methods of getting at the truth there. It was necessary, therefore, for me to keep a watch over my deportment, lest the enemy should get the better of me. But with all our caution and studied reserve, I am not sure that Mr. Freeland did not suspect that all was not right with us. It DID seem that he watched us more narrowly after the plan of escape had been conceived and discussed amongst us. Men seldom see themselves as others see them, and while to ourselves everything connected with our contemplated escape appeared concealed, Mr. Freeland may, with the peculiar prescience of a slaveholder, have mastered the huge thought which was disturbing our peace. As I now look back, I am the more inclined to think he suspected us, because, prudent as we were, I can see that we did many silly things well calculated to awaken suspicion. We were at times remarkably buoyant, singing hymns, and making

joyous exclamations, almost as triumphant in their tone as if we had reached a land of freedom and safety. A keen observer might have detected in our repeated singing of:

"O Canaan, sweet Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan,"

something more than a hope of reaching heaven. We meant to reach the NORTH, and the North was our Canaan.

"I thought I heard them say
There were lions in the way;
I don't expect to stay
Much longer here.
Run to Jesus, shun the danger.
I don't expect to stay
Much longer here,"

was our favorite air, and had a double meaning. On the lips of some it meant the expectation of a speedy summons to a world of spirits; but on the lips of our company it simply meant a speedy pilgrimage to a free State, and deliverance from all the evils and dangers of slavery.

I had succeeded in winning to my scheme a company of five young men, the very flower of the neighborhood, each one of whom would have commanded one thousand dollars in the home market. At New Orleans they would have brought fifteen hundred dollars apiece, and perhaps more. Their names were as follows: Henry Harris, John Harris, Sandy Jenkins, Charles Robert, and Henry Bailey. I was the youngest but one of the party. I had, however, the advantage of them all in experience, and in a knowledge of letters. This gave me a great influence over them. Perhaps not one of them, left to himself, would have dreamed of escape as a possible thing. They all wanted to be free, but the serious thought of running away had not entered into their minds until I won them to the undertaking. They were all tolerably well off—for slaves—and had dim hopes of being set free some day by their masters. If any one is to

blame for disturbing the quiet of the slaves and slave-masters of the neighborhood of St. Michaels, I AM THE MAN. I claim to be the instigator of the high crime (as the slave-holders regarded it), and I kept life in it till life could be kept in it no longer.

Pending the time of our contemplated departure out of our Egypt, we met often by night, and on every Sunday. At these meetings we talked the matter over, told our hopes and fears, and the difficulties discovered or imagined; and, like men of sense, we counted the cost of the enterprise to which we were committing ourselves. These meetings must have resembled, on a small scale, the meetings of the revolutionary conspirators in their primary condition. We were plotting against our (so-called) lawful rulers, with this difference—we sought our own good, and not the harm of our enemies. We did not seek to overthrow them, but to escape from them. As for Mr. Freeland, we all liked him, and would gladly have remained with him *as free men.* LIBERTY was our aim, and we had now come to think that we had a right to it against every obstacle, even against the lives of our enslavers.

We had several words, expressive of things important to us, which we understood, but which, even if distinctly heard by an outsider, would have conveyed no certain meaning. I hated this secrecy, but where slavery was powerful, and liberty weak, the latter was driven to concealment or destruction.

The prospect was not always bright. At times we were almost temped to abandon the enterprise, and to try to get back to that comparative peace of mind which even a man under the gallows might feel when all hope of escape had vanished. We were confident, bold, and determined, at times, and again doubting, timid, and wavering, whistling, like the boy in the graveyard, to keep away the spirits.

To look at the map and observe the proximity of Eastern Shore, Maryland, to Delaware and Pennsylvania, it may seem to the reader quite absurd to regard the proposed

cape as a formidable undertaking. But to UNDERSTAND, some one has said, a man must STAND UNDER. The real distance was great enough, but the imagined distance was, to our ignorance, much greater. Slaveholders sought to impress their slaves with a belief in the boundlessness of slave territory, and of their own limitless power. Our notions of the geography of the country were very vague and indistinct. The distance, however, was not the chief trouble, for the nearer the lines of a slave state to the borders of a free state the greater was the trouble. Hired kidnappers infested the borders. Then, too, we knew that merely reaching a free state did not free us, that wherever caught we could be returned to slavery. We knew then of no spot this side the ocean where we could be safe. We had heard of Canada, then the only real Canaan of the American bondman, simply as a country to which the wild goose and the swan repaired at the end of winter to escape the heat of summer, but not as the home of man. I knew something of theology, but nothing of geography. I really did not know that there was a State of New York, or a State of Massachusetts. I had heard of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, and all the Southern States, but was utterly ignorant of the free States. New York City was our northern limit, and to go there and to be forever harassed with the liability of being hunted down and returned to slavery, with the certainty of being treated ten times worse than ever before, was a prospect which might well cause some hesitation. The case sometimes, to our excited visions, stood thus: At every gate through which we had to pass we saw a watchman; at every ferry a guard; on every bridge a sentinel, and in every wood a patrol or slave-hunter. We were hemmed in on every side. The good to be sought and the evil to be shunned were flung in the balance and weighed against each other. On the one hand stood slavery, a stern reality glaring frightfully upon us, with the blood of millions in its polluted skirts, terrible to behold, greedily devouring our hard earnings and feeding upon our flesh.

This was the evil from which to escape. On the other hand, far away, back in the hazy distance, where all forms seemed but shadows under the flickering light of the north star, behind some craggy hill or snow-capped mountain, stood a doubtful freedom, half-frozen, beckoning us to her icy domain. This was the good to be sought. The inequality was as great as that between certainty and uncertainty. This in itself was enough to stagger us; but when we came to survey the untrodden road and conjecture the many possible difficulties, we were appalled, and at times, as I have said, were upon the point of giving over the struggle altogether. The reader can have little idea of the phantoms which would flit, in such circumstances, before the uneducated mind of the slave. Upon either side we saw grim death, assuming a variety of horrid shapes. Now it was starvation, causing us, in a strange and friendless land, to eat our own flesh. Now we were contending with the waves and were drowned. Now we were hunted by dogs and overtaken, and torn to pieces by their merciless fangs. We were stung by scorpions, chased by wild beasts, bitten by snakes, and worst of all, after having succeeded in swimming rivers, encountering wild beasts, sleeping in the woods, suffering hunger, cold, heat and nakedness, overtaken by hired kidnappers, who, in the name of the law and for the thrice-cursed reward, would, perchance, fire upon us, kill some, wound others, and capture all. This dark picture, drawn by ignorance and fear, at times greatly shook our determination, and not unfrequently caused us to

> "Rather bear the ills we had,
> Than flee to others which we knew not of."

I am not disposed to magnify this circumstance in my experience, and yet I think I shall seem to be so disposed to the reader, but no man can tell the intense agony which was felt by the slave when wavering on the point of making his escape. All that he has is at stake and even that which he has not is at stake also. The life which he has

may be lost, and the liberty which he seeks may not be gained.

Patrick Henry, to a listening senate which was thrilled by his magic eloquence and ready to stand by him in his boldest flights, could say, "Give me liberty or give me death"; and this saying was a sublime one, even for a freeman; but incomparably more sublime is the same sentiment when PRACTICALLY asserted by men accustomed to the lash and chain, men whose sensibilities must have become more or less deadened by their bondage. With us it was a doubtful liberty at best, that we sought, and a certain lingering death in the rice swamps and sugar fields if we failed. Life is not lightly regarded by men of sane minds. It is precious both to the pauper and to the prince, to the slave and to his master; and yet I believe there was not one among us who would not rather have been shot down than pass away life in hopeless bondage.

In the progress of our preparations Sandy (the root man) became troubled. He began to have distressing dreams. One of these, which happened on a Friday night, was to him of great significance, and I am quite ready to confess that I felt somewhat damped by it myself. He said: "Last night I dreamed that I was roused from sleep by strange noises, like the noises of a swarm of angry birds that caused a roar as they passed, and which fell upon my ear like a coming gale over the tops of the trees. Looking up to see what it could mean I saw you, Frederick, in the claws of a huge bird, surrounded by a large number of birds of all colors and sizes. These were all pecking at you, while you, with your arms, seemed to be trying to protect your eyes. Passing over me, the birds flew in a southwesterly direction, and I watched them until they were clean out of sight. Now I saw this as plainly as I now see you; and furder, honey, watch de Friday night dream; dere is sumpon in it shose you born; dere is indeed, honey." I did not like the dream, but I showed no concern, attributing it to the general excitement and perturbation consequent upon our con-

templated plan to escape. I could not, however, shake off its effect at once. I felt that it boded no good. Sandy was unusually emphatic and oracular, and his manner had much to do with the impression made upon me.

The plan which I recommended, and to which my comrades consented, for our escape, was to take a large canoe owned by Mr. Hamilton, and on the Saturday night previous to the Easter holidays launch out into the Chesapeake Bay and paddle for its head, a distance of seventy miles, with all our might. On reaching this point we were to turn the canoe adrift and bend our steps toward the north star till we reached a free state.

There were several objections to this plan. In rough weather the waters of the Chesapeake are much agitated, and there would be danger, in a canoe, of being swamped by the waves. Another objection was that the canoe would soon be missed, the absent slaves would at once be suspected of having taken it, and we should be pursued by some of the fast-sailing craft out of St. Michaels. Then again, if we reached the head of the bay and turned the canoe adrift, she might prove a guide to our track and bring the hunters after us.

These, and other objections, were set aside by the stronger ones, which could be urged against every other plan that could then be suggested. On the water we had a chance of being regarded as fishermen, in the service of a master. On the other hand, by taking the land route, through the counties adjoining Delaware, we should be subjected to all manner of interruptions, and many disagreeable questions, which might give us serious trouble. Any white man, if he pleased, was authorized to stop a man of color on any road, and examine and arrest him. By this arrangement many abuses (considered such even by slaveholders) occurred. Cases have been known where freemen, being called upon to show their free papers by a pack of ruffians and on the presentation of the papers, the ruffians have

torn them up, and seized the victim and sold him to a life of endless bondage.

The week before our intended start, I wrote a pass for each of our party, giving them permission to visit Baltimore during the Easter holidays. The pass ran after this manner:

"This is to certify that I, the undersigned, have given the bearer, my servant, John, full liberty to go to Baltimore to spend the Easter holidays.

"W. H.

"Near St. Michaels, Talbot Co., Md."

Although we were not going to Baltimore, and were intending to land east of North Point, in the direction I had seen the Philadelphia steamers go, these passes might be useful to us, in the lower part of the bay, while steering towards Baltimore. These were not, however, to be shown by us, until all other answers failed to satisfy the inquirer. We were all fully alive to the importance of being calm and self-possessed when accosted, if accosted we should be; and we more than once rehearsed to each other how we should behave in the hour of trial.

Those were long, tedious days and nights. The suspense was painful in the extreme. To balance probabilities, where life and liberty hang on the result, requires steady nerves. I panted for action, and was glad when the day, at the close of which, we were to start, dawned upon us. Sleeping the night before was out of the question. I probably felt more deeply than any of my companions, because I was the instigator of the movement. The responsibility of the whole enterprise rested on my shoulders. The glory of success, and the shame and confusion of failure, could not be matters of indifference to me. Our food was prepared, our clothes were packed; we were all ready to go, and impatient for Saturday morning—considering THAT the last of our bondage.

I cannot describe the tempest and tumult of my brain that morning. The reader will please bear in mind that in

a slave State an unsuccessful runaway slave was not only subjected to cruel torture, and sold away to the far South, but he was frequently execrated by the other slaves. He was charged with making the condition of the other slaves intolerable by laying them all under the suspicion of their masters—subjecting them to greater vigilance, and imposing greater limitations on their privileges. I dreaded murmurs from this quarter. It was difficult, too, for a slave-master to believe that slaves escaping had not been aided in their flight by some one of their fellow slaves. When, therefore, a slave was missing, every slave on the place was closely examined as to his knowledge of the undertaking.

Our anxiety grew more and more intense, as the time of our intended departure drew nigh. It was truly felt to be a matter of life and death with us, and we fully intended to FIGHT, as well as RUN, if necessity should occur for that extremity. But the trial-hour had not yet come. It was easy to resolve, but not so easy to act. I expected there might be some drawing back at the last; it was natural there should be; therefore, during the intervening time I lost no opportunity to explain away difficulties, remove doubts, dispel fears, and inspire all with firmness. It was too late to look back, and now was the time to go forward. I appealed to the pride of my comrades by telling them that if, after having solemnly promised to go, as they had done, they now failed to make the attempt, they would, in effect, brand themselves with cowardice, and might well sit down, fold their arms, and acknowledge themselves fit only to be slaves. This detestable character all were unwilling to assume. Every man except Sandy (he, much to our regret, withdrew) stood firm, and at our last meeting we pledged ourselves afresh, and in the most solemn manner, that at the time appointed we WOULD certainly start on our long journey for a free country. This meeting was in the middle of the week, at the end of which we were to start.

Early on the appointed morning we went as usual to the field, but with hearts that beat quickly and anxiously. Any

one intimately acquainted with us might have seen that all was not well with us, and that some monster lingered in our thoughts. Our work that morning was the same as it had been for several days past—drawing out and spreading manure. While thus engaged, I had a sudden presentiment, which flashed upon me like lightning in a dark night, revealing to the lonely traveler the gulf before and the enemy behind. I instantly turned to Sandy Jenkins, who was near me, and said: "SANDY, WE ARE BETRAYED!—Something has just told me so." I felt as sure of it as if the officers were in sight. Sandy said: "Man, dat is strange; but I feel as you do." If my mother—then long in her grave—had appeared before me and told me that we were betrayed, I could not at that moment have felt more certain of the fact.

In a few minutes after this, the long, low, and distant notes of the horn summoned us from the field to breakfast. I felt as one may be supposed to feel before being led forth to be executed for some great offense. I wanted no breakfast, but I went with the other slaves toward the house for form's sake. My feelings were not disturbed as to the right of running away; on that point I had no misgiving whatever, but from a sense of the consequences of failure.

In thirty minutes after that vivid impression came the apprehended crash. On reaching the house, and glancing my eye toward the lane gate, the worst was at once made known. The lane gate to Mr. Freeland's house was nearly half a mile from the door, and much shaded by the heavy wood which bordered the main road. I was, however, able to descry four white men and two colored men approaching. The white men were on horseback, and the colored men were walking behind, and seemed to be tied. "IT IS INDEED ALL OVER WITH US; WE ARE SURELY BETRAYED"; I thought to myself. I became composed, or at least comparatively so, and calmly awaited the result. I watched the ill-omened company entering the gate. Successful flight was impossible, and I made up my mind to stand and meet the evil, whatever it might be, for I was not altogether without

a slight hope that things might turn differently from what I had at first feared. In a few moments in came Mr. William Hamilton, riding very rapidly and evidently excited. He was in the habit of riding very slowly, and was seldom known to gallop his horse. This time his horse was nearly at full speed, causing the dust to roll thick behind him. Mr. Hamilton, though one of the most resolute men in the neighborhood, was, nevertheless, a remarkably mild-spoken man, and even when greatly excited his language was cool and circumspect. He came to the door, and inquired if Mr. Freeland was in. I told him that Mr. Freeland was at the barn. Off the old gentleman rode toward the barn, with unwonted speed. In a few moments, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Freeland came down from the barn to the house, and just as they made their appearance in the front yard, three men, who proved to be constables, came dashing into the lane on horseback, as if summoned by a sign requiring quick work. A few seconds brought them into the front yard where they hastily dismounted and tied their horses. This done, they joined Mr. Freeland and Mr. Hamilton, who were standing a short distance from the kitchen. A few moments were spent as if in consulting how to proceed, and then the whole party walked up to the kitchen door. There was now no one in the kitchen but myself and John Harris; Henry and Sandy were yet in the barn. Mr. Freeland came inside the kitchen door, and with an agitated voice, called me by name, and told me to come forward; that there were some gentlemen who wished to see me. I stepped toward them at the door, and asked what they wanted; when the constables grabbed me, and told me that I had better not resist; that I had been in a scrape, or was said to have been in one; that they were merely going to take me where I could be examined; that they would have me brought before my master at St. Michaels, and if the evidence against me was not proved true I should be acquitted. I was now firmly tied, and completely at the mercy of my captors. Resistance was idle. They were

five in number, armed to the teeth. When they had secured me, they turned to John Harris, and in a few moments succeeded in tying him as firmly as they had tied me. They next turned toward Henry Harris, who had now returned from the barn. "Cross your hands," said the constable to Henry. "I won't," said Henry, in a voice so firm and clear, and in a manner so determined, as for a moment to arrest all proceedings. "Won't you cross your hands?" said Tom Graham, the constable. "No, I WON'T," said Henry, with increasing emphasis. Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Freeland, and the officers now came near to Henry. Two of the constables drew out their shining pistols, and swore, by the name of God, that he should cross his hands or they would shoot him down. Each of these hired ruffians now cocked their pistols, and, with fingers apparently on the triggers, presented their deadly weapons to the breast of the unarmed slave, saying, if he did not cross his hands, they would "blow his d——d heart out of him." "SHOOT ME, SHOOT ME," said Henry; "you can't kill me but once. SHOOT, SHOOT, and be damned! I won't be tied!" This, the brave fellow said in a voice as defiant and heroic in its tone as was the language itself; and at the moment of saying this, with the pistols at his very breast, he quickly raised his arms, and dashed them from the puny hands of his assassins, the weapons flying in all directions. Now came the struggle. All hands rushed upon the brave fellow, and after beating him for some time they succeeded in overpowering and tying him. Henry put me to shame; he fought, and fought bravely. John and I had made no resistance. The fact is, I never saw much use of fighting where there was no reasonable probability of whipping anybody. Yet there was something almost providential in the resistance made by Henry. But for that resistance every soul of us would have been hurried off to the far South. Just a moment previous to the trouble with Henry, Mr. Hamilton MILDLY said,—and this gave me the unmistakable clue to the cause of our arrest,—"Perhaps we had

now better make a search for those protections, which we understand Frederick has written for himself and the rest." Had these passes been found, they would have confirmed all the statements of our betrayer. Thanks to the resistance of Henry, the excitement produced by the scuffle drew all attention in that direction, and I succeeded in flinging my pass, unobserved, into the fire. The confusion attendant on the scuffle, and the apprehension of still further trouble, perhaps, led our captors to forego, for the time, any search for "THOSE PROTECTIONS which Frederick was said to have written for his companions"; so we were not yet convicted of the purpose to run away, and it was evident that there was some doubt on the part of all whether we had been guilty of such purpose.

Just as we were all completely tied, and about ready to start toward St. Michaels, and thence to jail, Mrs. Betsy Freeland (mother to William, who was much attched, after the Southern fashion, to Henry and John, they having been reared from childhood in her house) came to the kitchen door with her hands full of biscuits, for we had not had our breakfast that morning, and divided them between Henry and John. This done, the lady made the following parting address to me, pointing her bony finger at me: "You devil! you yellow devil! It was you who put it into the heads of Henry and John to run away. But for YOU, YOU LONG-LEGGED, YELLOW DEVIL, Henry and John would never have thought of running away." I gave the lady a look which called forth from her a scream of mingled wrath and terror, as she slammed the kitchen door and went in, leaving me, with the rest, in hands as harsh as her own broken voice.

Could the kind reader have been riding along the main road to or from Easton that morning, his eye would have met a painful sight. He would have seen five young men, guilty of no crime save that of preferring LIBERTY to SLAVERY, drawn along the public highway—firmly bound together, tramping through dust and heat, barefooted and

bareheaded—fastened to three strong horses, whose riders were armed with pistols and daggers, on their way to prison like felons, and suffering every possible insult from the crowds of idle, vulgar people who clustered round, and heartlessly made their failure to escape the occasion for all manner of ribaldry and sport. As I looked upon this crowd of vile persons, and saw myself and friends thus assailed and persecuted, I could not help seeing the fulfillment of Sandy's dream. I was in the hands of moral vultures, and held in their sharp talons, and was being hurried away toward Easton, in a south-easterly direction, amid the jeers of new birds of the same feather, through every neighborhood we passed. It seemed to me that everybody was out, and knew the cause of our arrest, and awaited our passing in order to feast their vindictive eyes on our misery.

Some said "I OUGHT TO BE HANGED," and others, "I OUGHT TO BE BURNED"; others, I ought to have the "hide" taken off my back; while no one gave us a kind word or sympathizing look, except the poor slaves who were lifting their heavy hoes, and who cautiously glanced at us through the post-and-rail fences, behind which they were at work. Our sufferings that morning can be more easily imagined than described. Our hopes were all blasted at one blow. The cruel injustice, the victorious crime, and the helplessness of innocence, led me to ask in my ignorance and weakness: Where is now the God of justice and mercy? and why have these wicked men the power thus to trample upon our rights, and to insult our feelings? and yet in the next moment came the consoling thought, "the day of the oppressor will come at last." Of one thing I could be glad: not one of my dear friends upon whom I had brought this great calamity, either by word or look, reproached me for having led them into it. We were a band of brothers, and never dearer to each other than now. The thought which gave us the most pain was the probable separation which would now take place in case we were sold off to the far South, as we were likely to be. While the constables were

looking forward, Henry and I being fastened together, could occasionally exchange a word without being observed by the kidnappers who had us in charge. "What shall I do with my pass?" said Henry. "Eat it with your biscuit," said I; "it won't do to tear it up." We were now near St. Michaels. The direction concerning the passes was passed around, and executed. "Own nothing," said I. "Own nothing" was passed round, enjoined, and assented to. Our confidence in each other was unshaken, and we were quite resolved to succeed or fail together; as much after the calamity which had befallen us as before.

On reaching St. Michaels we underwent a sort of examination at my master's store, and it was evident to my mind that Master Thomas suspected the truthfulness of the evidence upon which they had acted in arresting us, and that he only affected, to some extent, the positiveness with which he asserted our guilt. There was nothing said by any of our company which could, in any manner, prejudice our cause, and there was hope yet that we should be able to return to our homes, if for nothing else, at least to find out the guilty man or woman who betrayed us.

To this end we all denied that we had been guilty of intended flight. Master Thomas said that the evidence he had of our intention to run away was strong enough to hang us in a case of murder. "But," said I, "the cases are not equal; if murder were committed—the thing is done! but we have not run away. Where is the evidence against us?" For we all wanted, above all things, to know who had betrayed us, that we might have something tangible on which to pour our execrations. From something which dropped, in the course of the talk, it appeared that there was but one witness against us, and that that witness could not be produced. Master Thomas would not tell us who his informant was, but we suspected, and suspected ONE person only. Several circumstances seemed to point Sandy out as our betrayer. His entire knowledge of our plans, his participation in them, his withdrawal from us,

his dream and his simultaneous presentiment that we were betrayed, the taking us and the leaving him, and yet we could not suspect him. We all loved him too well to think it possible that he could have betrayed us. So we rolled the guilt on other shoulders.

We were literally dragged, that morning, behind horses, a distance of fifteen miles, and placed in the Easton jail. We were glad to reach the end of our journey, for our pathway had been full of insult and mortification. Such is the power of public opinion, that it is hard, even for the innocent, to feel the happy consolation of innocence when they fall under the maledictions of this power. How could we regard ourselves as in the right, when all about us denounced us as criminals, and had the power and the disposition to treat us as such?

In jail we were placed under the care of Mr. Joseph Graham, the sheriff of the county. Henry and John and myself were placed in one room, and Henry Bailey and Charles Roberts in another by themselves. This separation was intended to deprive us of the advantage of concert, and to prevent trouble in jail.

Once shut up, a new set of tormenters came upon us. A swarm of imps in human shape—the slave-traders and agents of slave-traders—who gathered in every country town of the State waching for chance to buy human flesh (as buzzards watch for carrion), flocked in upon us to ascertain if our masters had placed us in jail to be sold. Such a set of debased and villainous creatures I never saw before and hope never to see again. I felt as if surrounded by a pack of FIENDS fresh from PERDITION. They laughed, leered, and grinned at us, saying, "Ah, boys, we have got you, haven't we? So you were going to make your escape? Where were you going to?" After taunting us in this way as long as they liked, they one by one subjected us to an examination, with a view to ascertain our value, feeling our arms and legs and shaking us by the shoulders, to see if we were sound and healthy, impudently asking us, "how

we would like to have them for masters?" To such questions we were quite dumb (much to their annoyance). One fellow told me, "if he had me he would cut the devil out of me pretty quick."

These negro-buyers were very offensive to the genteel southern Christian public. They were looked upon in respectable Maryland society as necessary but detestable characters. As a class, they were hardened ruffians, made such by nature and by occupation. Yes, they were the legitimate fruit of slavery, and were second in villainy only to slaveholders themselves who made such a class POSSIBLE. They were mere hucksters of the slave produce of Maryland and Virginia—coarse, cruel, and swaggering bullies, whose very breathing was blasphemy and blood.

Aside from these slave-buyers who infested the prison from time to time, our quarters were much more comfortable than we had any right to expect them to be. Our allowance of food was small and coarse, but our room was the best in the jail—neat and spacious, and with nothing about it necessarily reminding us of being in prison but its heavy locks and bolts and the black iron lattice-work at the windows. We were prisoners of state compared with most slaves who were put into that Easton jail. But the place was not one of contentment. Bolts, bars, and grated windows are not acceptable to freedom-loving people of any color. The suspense, too, was painful. Every step on the stairway was listened to, in the hope that the comer would cast a ray of light on our fate. We would have given the hair of our heads for half a dozen words with one of the waiters in Sol Lowe's hotel. Such waiters were in the way of hearing, at the table, the probable course of things. We could see them flitting about in their white jackets in front of this hotel, but could speak to none of them.

Soon after the holidays were over, contrary to all our expectations, Messrs. Hamilton and Freeland came up to Easton; not to make a bargain with "Georgia traders," nor to send us up to Austin Woldfolk, as was usual in the case

of runaway slaves, but to release Charles, Henry Harris, Henry Bailey, and John Harris from prison, and this, too, without the infliction of a single blow. I was left alone in prison. The innocent had been taken and the guilty left. My friends were separated from me, and apparently forever. This circumstance caused me more pain than any other incident connected with our capture and imprisonment. Thirty-nine lashes on my naked and bleeding back would have been joyfully borne, in preference to this separation from these, the friends of my youth. And yet I could not but feel that I was the victim of something like justice. Why should these young men, who were led into this scheme by me, suffer as much as the instigator? I felt glad that they were released from prison, and from the dread prospect of a life (or death I should rather say) in the rice-swamps. It is due to the noble Henry to say that he was almost as reluctant to leave the prison with me in it as he had been to be tied and dragged to prison. But he and we all knew that we should, in all the likelihoods of the case, be separated, in the event of being sold; and since we were completely in the hands of our owners they concluded it would be best to go peaceably home.

Not until this last separation, dear reader, had I touched those profounder depths of desolation which it is the lot of slaves often to reach. I was solitary and alone within the walls of a stone prison, left to a fate of lifelong misery. I had hoped and expected much, for months before, but my hopes and expectations were now withered and blasted. The ever-dreaded slave life in Georgia, Louisiana, and Alabama—from which escape was next to impossible—now in my loneliness stared me in the face. The possibility of ever becoming anything but an abject slave, a mere machine in the hands of an owner, had now fled, and it seemed to me it had fled forever. A life of living death, beset with innumerable horrors of the cotton field and the sugar plantation, seemed to be my doom. The fiends who rushed into the prison when we were first put there continued

to visit me and ply me with questions and tantalizing remarks. I was insulted, but helpless; keenly alive to the demands of justice and liberty, but with no means of asserting them. To talk to those imps about justice or mercy would have been as absurd as to reason with bears and tigers. Lead and steel were the only arguments that they were capable of appreciating, as the events of the subsequent years have proved.

After remaining in this life of misery and despair about a week, which seemed a month, Master Thomas, very much to my surprise and greatly to my relief, came to the prison and took me out, for the purpose, as he said, of sending me to Alabama with a friend of his, who would emancipate me at the end of eight years. I felt glad enough to get out of prison, but I had no faith in the story that his friend would emancipate me. Besides, I had never heard of his having a friend in Alabama, and I took the announcement simply as an easy and comfortable method of shipping me off to the far South. There was a little scandal, too, connected with the idea of one Christian selling another to Georgia traders, while it was deemed every way proper for them to sell to others. I thought this friend in Alabama was an invention to meet this difficulty, for Master Thomas was quite jealous of his religious reputation, however unconcerned he might have been about his real Christian character. In these remarks it is possible I do him injustice. He certainly did not exert his power over me as he might have done in the case, but acted, upon the whole, very generously, considering the nature of my offense. He had the power and the provocation to send me, without reserve, into the very Everglades of Florida, beyond the remotest hope of emancipation; and his refusal to exercise that power must be set down to his credit.

After lingering about St. Michaels a few days, and no friend from Alabama appearing, Master Thomas decided to send me back again to Baltimore, to live with his brother Hugh, with whom he was now at peace; possibly he be-

came so by his profession of religion at the camp meeting in the Bay-side. Master Thomas told me he wished me to go to Baltimore and learn a trade; and that if I behaved myself properly he would *emancipate me at twenty-five.* Thanks for this one beam of hope in the future! The promise had but one fault—it seemed too good to be true.

UP FROM SLAVERY

By BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

I

I was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth, but at any rate I suspect I must have been born somewhere and at some time. As nearly as I have been able to learn, I was born near a cross-roads post-office called Hale's Ford, and the year was 1858 or 1859. I do not know the month or the day. The earliest impressions I can now recall are of the plantation and the slave quarters—the latter being the part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins.

My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because my owners were especially cruel, for they were not, as compared with many others. I was born in a typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square. In this cabin I lived with my mother and a brother and sister till after the Civil War, when we were all declared free.

Of my ancestry I know almost nothing. In the slave quarters, and even later, I heard whispered conversations among the colored people of the tortures which the slaves, including, no doubt, my ancestors on my mother's side, suffered in the middle passage of the slave ship while being conveyed from Africa to America. I have been unsuccessful in securing any information that would throw any accurate light upon the history of my family beyond my mother. She, I remember, had a half-brother and a half-sister. In the days of slavery not very much attention was given to family

history and family records—that is, black family records. My mother, I suppose, attracted the attention of a purchaser who was afterward my owner and hers. Her addition to the slave family attracted about as much attention as the purchase of a new horse or cow. Of my father I know even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man who lived on one of the near-by plantations. Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing. But I do not find especial fault with him. He was simply another unfortunate victim of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at the time.

The cabin was not only our living place, but was also used as the kitchen for the plantation. My mother was the plantation cook. The cabin was without glass windows; it had only openings in the side which let in the light, and also the cold, chilly air of winter. There was a door to the cabin—that is, something that was called a door—but the uncertain hinges by which it was hung, and the large cracks in it, to say nothing of the fact that it was too small, made the room a very uncomfortable one. In addition to these openings there was, in the lower right-hand corner of the room, the "cat-hole,"—a contrivance which almost every mansion or cabin in Virginia possessed during the ante-bellum period. The "cat-hole" was a square opening about seven by eight inches, provided for the purpose of letting the cat pass in and out of the house at will during the night. In the case of our particular cabin I could never understand the necessity of this convenience, since there were at least a half-dozen other places in the cabin that would have accommodated the cats. There was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor. In the centre of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place in which to store sweet potatoes during the winter. An impression of this potato-hole is very distinctly engraved upon my mem-

ory, because I recall that during the process of putting the potatoes in or taking them out I would often come into possession of one or two, which I roasted and thoroughly enjoyed. There was no cooking-stove on our plantation, and all the cooking for the whites and slaves my mother had to do over an open fireplace, mostly in pots and "skillets." While the poorly built cabin caused us to suffer with cold in the winter, the heat from the open fireplace in summer was equally trying.

The early years of my life, which were spent in the little cabin, were not very different from those of thousands of other slaves. My mother, of course, had little time in which to give attention to the training of her children during the day. She snatched a few moments for our care in the early morning before her work began, and at night after the day's work was done. One of my earliest recollections is that of my mother cooking a chicken late at night and awakening her children for the purpose of feeding them. How or where she got it I do not know. I presume, however, it was procured from our owner's farm. Some people may call this theft. If such a thing were to happen now, I should condemn it as theft myself. But taking place at the time it did, and for the reason that it did, no one could ever make me believe that my mother was guilty of thieving. She was simply a victim of the system of slavery. I cannot remember having slept in a bed until after our family was declared free by the Emancipation Proclamation. Three children—John, my older brother, Amanda, my sister, and myself—had a pallet on the dirt floor, or, to be more correct, we slept in and on a bundle of filthy rags laid upon the dirt floor.

I was asked not long ago to tell something about the sports and pastimes that I engaged in during my youth. Until that question was asked it had never occurred to me that there was no period of my life that was devoted to play. From the time that I can remember anything, almost every day of my life has been occupied in some kind of

labour; though I think I would now be a more useful man if I had had time for sports. During the period that I spent in slavery I was not large enough to be of much service, still I was occupied most of the time in cleaning the yards, carrying water to the men in the fields, or going to the mill to which I used to take the corn, once a week, to be ground. The mill was about three miles from the plantation. This work I always dreaded. The heavy bag of corn would be thrown across the back of the horse, and the corn divided about evenly on each side; but in some way, almost without exception, on these trips, the corn would so shift as to become unbalanced and would fall off the horse, and often I would fall with it. As I was not strong enough to reload the corn upon the horse, I would have to wait, sometimes for many hours, till a chance passer-by came along who would help me out of my trouble. The hours while waiting for some one were usually spent in crying. The time consumed in this way made me late in reaching the mill, and by the time I got my corn ground and reached home it would be far into the night. The road was a lonely one, and often led through dense forests. I was always frightened. The woods were said to be full of soldiers who had deserted from the army, and I had been told that the first thing a deserter did to a Negro boy when he found him alone was to cut off his ears. Besides, when I was late in getting home I knew I would always get a severe scolding or a flogging.

I had no schooling whatever while I was a slave though I remember on several occasions I went as far as the schoolhouse door with one of my young mistresses to carry her books. The picture of several dozen boys and girls in a schoolroom engaged in study made a deep impression upon me, and I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise.

So far as I can now recall, the first knowledge that I got of the fact that we were slaves, and that freedom of the

slaves was being discussed, was early one morning before day, when I was awakened by my mother kneeling over her children and fervently praying that Lincoln and his armies might be successful, and that one day she and her children might be free. In this connection I have never been able to understand how the slaves throughout the South, completely ignorant as were the masses so far as books or newspapers were concerned, were able to keep themselves so accurately and completely informed about the great National questions that were agitating the country. From the time that Garrison, Lovejoy, and others began to agitate for freedom, the slaves throughout the South kept in close touch with the progress of the movement. Though I was a mere child during the preparation for the Civil War and during the war itself, I now recall the many late-at-night whispered discussions that I heard my mother and the other slaves on the plantation indulge in. These discussions showed that they understood the situation, and that they kept themselves informed of events by what was termed the "grape-vine" telegraph.

During the campaign when Lincoln was first a candidate for the Presidency, the slaves on our far-off plantation, miles from any railroad or large city or daily newspaper, knew what the issues involved were. When war was begun between the North and the South, every slave on our plantation felt and knew that, though other issues were discussed, the primal one was that of slavery. Even the most ignorant members of my race on the remote plantations felt in their hearts, with a certainty that admitted of no doubt, that the freedom of the slaves would be the one great result of the war, if the Northern armies conquered. Every success of the Federal armies and every defeat of the Confederate forces was watched with the keenest and most intense interest. Often the slaves got knowledge of the results of great battles before the white people received it. This news was usually gotten from the coloured man who was sent to the post-office for the mail. In our case the

post-office was about three miles from the plantation, and the mail came once or twice a week. The man who was sent to the office would linger about the place long enough to get the drift of the conversation from the group of white people who naturally congregated there, after receiving their mail, to discuss the latest news. The mail-carrier on his way back to our master's house would as naturally retail the news that he had secured among the slaves, and in this way they often heard of important events before the white people at the "big house," as the master's house was called.

I cannot remember a single instance during my childhood or early boyhood when our entire family sat down to the table together, and God's blessing was asked, and the family ate a meal in a civilized manner. On the plantation in Virginia, and even later, meals were gotten by the children very much as dumb animals get theirs. It was a piece of bread here and a scrap of meat there. It was a cup of milk at one time and some potatoes at another. Sometimes a portion of our family would eat out of the skillet or pot, while some one else would eat from a tin plate held on the knees, and often using nothing but the hands with which to hold the food. When I had grown to sufficient size, I was required to go to the "big house" at meal-times to fan the flies from the table by means of a large set of paper fans operated by a pulley. Naturally much of the conversation of the white people turned upon the subject of freedom and the war, and I absorbed a good deal of it. I remember that at one time I saw two of my young mistresses and some lady visitors eating ginger-cakes, in the yard. At that time those cakes seemed to me to be absolutely the most tempting and desirable things that I had ever seen; and I then and there resolved that, if I ever got free, the height of my ambition would be reached if I could get to the point where I could secure and eat ginger-cakes in the way that I saw those ladies doing.

Of course as the war was prolonged the white people, in

many cases, often found it difficult to secure food for themselves. I think the slaves felt the deprivation less than the whites, because the usual diet for the slaves was corn bread and pork, and these could be raised on the plantation; but coffee, tea, sugar, and other articles which the whites had been accustomed to use could not be raised on the plantation, and the conditions brought about by the war frequently made it impossible to secure these things. The whites were often in great straits. Parched corn was used instead of sugar. Many times nothing was used to sweeten the so-called tea and coffee.

The first pair of shoes that I recall wearing were wooden ones. They had rough leather on the top, but the bottoms, which were about an inch thick, were of wood. When I walked they made a fearful noise, and besides this they were very inconvenient, since there was no yielding to the natural pressure of the foot. In wearing them one presented an exceedingly awkward appearance. The most trying ordeal that I was forced to endure as a slave boy, however, was the wearing of a flax shirt. In the portion of Virginia where I lived it was common to use flax as part of the clothing for the slaves. That part of the flax from which our clothing was made was largely the refuse, which of course, was the cheapest and roughest part. I can scarcely imagine any torture, except, perhaps, the pulling of a tooth, that is equal to that caused by putting on a new flax shirt for the first time. It is almost equal to the feeling that one would experience if he had a dozen or more chestnut burrs, or a hundred small pin-points, in contact with his flesh. Even to this day I can recall accurately the tortures that I underwent when putting on one of these garments. The fact that my flesh was soft and tender added to the pain. But I had no choice. I had to wear the flax shirt or none; and had it been left to me to choose, I should have chosen to wear no covering. In connection with the flax shirt, my brother John, who is several years older than I am, performed one of the most generous acts that I ever heard of

one slave relative doing for another. On several occasions when I was being forced to wear a new flax shirt, he generously agreed to put it on in my stead and wear it for several days, till it was "broken in." Until I had grown to be quite a youth this single garment was all that I wore.

One may get the idea, from what I have said, that there was bitter feeling toward the white people on the part of my race, because of the fact that most of the white population was away fighting in a war which would result in keeping the Negro in slavery if the South was successful. In the case of the slaves on our place this was not true, and it was not true of any large portion of the slave population in the South where the Negro was treated with anything like decency. During the Civil War one of my young masters was killed, and two were severely wounded. I recall the feeling of sorrow which existed among the slaves when they heard of the death of "Mars' Billy." It was no sham sorrow but real. Some of the slaves had nursed "Mars' Billy"; others had played with him when he was a child. "Mars' Billy" had begged for mercy in the case of others when the overseer or master was thrashing them. The sorrow in the slave quarter was only second to that in the "big house." When the two young masters were brought home wounded, the sympathy of the slaves was shown in many ways. They were just as anxious to assist in the nursing as the family relatives of the wounded. Some of the slaves would even beg for the privilege of sitting up at night to nurse their wounded masters. This tenderness and sympathy on the part of those held in bondage was a result of their kindly and generous nature. In order to defend and protect the women and children who were left on the plantations when the white males went to war, the slaves would have laid down their lives. The slave who was selected to sleep in the "big house" during the absence of the males was considered to have the place of honour. Any one attempting to harm "young Mistress" or "old Mistress" during the night would have had to cross the dead body of the

slave to do so. I do not know how many have noticed it, but I think that it will be found to be true that there are few instances, either in slavery or freedom, in which a member of my race has been known to betray a specific trust.

As a rule, not only did the members of my race entertain no feelings of bitterness against the whites before and during the war, but there are many instances of Negroes tenderly caring for their former masters and mistresses who for some reason have become poor and dependent since the war. I know of instances where the former masters of slaves have for years been supplied with money by their former slaves to keep them from suffering. I have known of still other cases in which the former slaves have assisted in the education of the descendants of their former owners. I know of a case on a large plantation in the South in which a young white man, the son of the former owner of the estate, has become so reduced in purse and self-control by reason of drink that he is a pitiable creature; and yet, notwithstanding the poverty of the coloured people themselves on the plantation, they have for years supplied this young white man with the necessities of life. One sends him a little coffee, or sugar, another a little meat, and so on. Nothing that the coloured people possess is too good for the son of "old Mars' Tom," who will perhaps never be permitted to suffer while any remain on the place who knew directly or indirectly of "old Mars' Tom."

I have said that there are few instances of a member of my race betraying a specific trust. One of the best illustrations of this which I know of is in the case of an ex-slave from Virginia whom I met not long ago in a little town in the state of Ohio. I found that this man had made a contract with his master, two or three years previous to the Emancipation Proclamation, to the effect that the slave was to be permitted to buy himself, by paying so much per year for his body; and while he was paying for himself, he was to be permitted to labour where and for whom he

pleased. Finding that he could secure better wages in Ohio, he went there. When freedom came, he was still in debt to his master some three hundred dollars. Notwithstanding that the Emancipation Proclamation freed him from any obligations to his master, this black man walked the greater portion of the distance back to where his old master lived in Virginia, and placed the last dollar, with interest, in his hands. In talking to me about this, the man told me that he knew that he did not have to pay the debt, but that he had given his word to his master, and his word he had never broken. He felt that he could not enjoy his freedom till he had fulfilled his promise.

From some things that I have said one may get the idea that some of the slaves did not want freedom. This is not true. I have never seen one who did not want to be free, or one who would reurn to slavery.

I pity from the bottom of my heart any nation or body of people that is so unfortunate as to get entangled in the net of slavery. I have long since ceased to cherish any spirit of bitterness against the Southern white people on account of the enslavement of my race. No one section of our country was wholly responsible for its introduction, and, besides, it was recognized and protected for years by the General Government. Having once got its tentacles fastened on to the economic and social life of the Republic, it was no easy matter for the country to relieve itself of the institution. Then, when we rid ourselves of prejudice, or racial feeling, and look facts in the face, we must acknowledge that, notwithstanding the cruelty and moral wrong of slavery, the ten million Negroes inhabiting this country, who themselves or whose ancestors went through the school of American slavery, are in a stronger and more hopeful condition, materially, intellectually, morally, and religiously, than is true of an equal number of black people in any other portion of the globe. This is so to such an extent that Negroes in this country, who themselves or whose forefathers went through the school of slavery, are constantly

returning to Africa as missionaries to enlighten those who remained in the fatherland. This I say, not to justify slavery—on the other hand, I condemn it as an institution, as we all know that in America it was established for selfish and financial reasons, and not from a missionary motive—but to call attention to a fact, and to show how Providence so often uses men and institutions to accomplish a purpose. When persons ask me in these days how, in the midst of what sometimes seems hopelessly discouraging conditions, I can have such faith in the future of my race in this country, I remind them of the wilderness through which and out of which, a good Providence has already led us.

Ever since I have been old enough to think for myself, I have entertained the idea that, notwithstanding the cruel wrongs inflicted upon us the black man got nearly as much out of slavery as the white man did. The hurtful influences of the institution were not by any means confined to the Negro. This was fully illustrated by the life upon our own plantation. The whole machinery of slavery was so constructed as to cause labour, as a rule, to be looked upon as a badge of degradation, of inferiority. Hence labour was something that both races on the slave plantation sought to escape. The slave system on our place, in a large measure, took the spirit of self-reliance and self-help out of the white people. My old master had many boys and girls, but not one, so far as I know, ever mastered a single trade or special line of productive industry. The girls were not taught to cook, sew, or to take care of the house. All this was left to the slaves. The slaves, of course, had little personal interest in the life of the plantation, and their ignorance prevented them from learning how to do things in the most improved and thorough manner. As a result of the system, fences were out of repair, gates were hanging half off the hinges, doors creaked, window-panes were out, plastering had fallen but was not replaced. Weeds grew in the yard. As a rule, there was food for whites and blacks, but inside the house, and on the dining room table, there was wanting

that delicacy and refinement of touch and finish which can make a home the most convenient, comfortable, and attractive place in the world. Withal there was a waste of food and other materials which was sad. When freedom came, the slaves were almost as well fitted to begin life anew as the master, except in the matter of book-learning and ownership of property. The slave owner and his sons had mastered no special industry. They unconsciously had imbibed the feeling that manual labour was not the proper thing for them. On the other hand, the slaves, in many cases, had mastered some handicraft, and none were ashamed, and few unwilling, to labour.

Finally, the war closed, and the day of freedom came. It was a momentous and eventful day to all upon our plantation. We had been expecting it. Freedom was in the air, and had been for months. Deserting soldiers returning to their homes were to be seen every day. Others who had been discharged, or whose regiments had been paroled, were constantly passing near our place. The "grape-vine telegraph" was kept busy night and day. The news and mutterings of great events were swiftly carried from one plantation to another. In the fear of "Yankee" invasions, the silverware and other valuables were taken from the "big house," buried in the woods, and guarded by trusted slaves. Woe be to any one who would have attempted to disturb the buried treasure. The slaves would give the Yankee soldiers food, drink, clothing—anything but that which had been specifically intrusted to their care and honour. As the great day drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual. It was bolder, had more ring and lasted later into the night. Most of the verses of the plantation songs had some reference to freedom. True, they had sung those same verses before, but they had been careful to explain that the "freedom" in these songs referred to the next world, and had no connection with life in this world. Now they gradually threw off the mask, and were not afraid to let it be known that the "freedom" in their songs

meant freedom of the body in this world. The night before the eventful day, word was sent to the slave quarters to the effect that something unusual was going to take place at the "big house" the next morning. There was little, if any, sleep that night. All was excitement and expectancy. Early the next morning word was sent to all slaves, old and young, to gather at the house. In company with my mother, brother, and sister, and a large number of other slaves, I went to the master's house. All of our master's family were either standing or seated on the veranda of the house, where they could see what was to take place and hear what was said. There was a feeling of deep interest, or perhaps sadness, on their faces, but not bitterness. As I now recall the impression they made upon me, they did not at the moment seem to be sad because of the loss of property, but rather because of parting with those whom they had reared and who were in many ways very close to them. The most distinct thing that I now recall in connection with the scene was that some man who seemed to be a stranger (a United States officer, I presume) made a little speech and then read a rather long paper—the Emancipation Proclamation, I think. After the reading we were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother, who was standing by my side, leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks. She explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see.

For some minutes there was great rejoicing, and thanksgiving, and wild scenes of ecstasy. But there was no feeling of bitterness. In fact, there was pity among the slaves for our former owners. The wild rejoicing on the part of the emancipated coloured people lasted but for a brief period, for I noticed that by the time they returned to their cabins there was a change in their feelings. The great responsibility of being free, of having charge of themselves, of having to think and plan for themselves and their children,

seemed to take possession of them. It was very much like suddenly turning a youth of ten or twelve years out into the world to provide for himself. In a few hours the great questions with which the Anglo-Saxon race had been grappling for centuries had been thrown upon these people to be solved. These were the questions of a home, a living, the rearing of children, education, citizenship, and the establishment and support of churches. Was it any wonder that within a few hours the wild rejoicing ceased and a feeling of deep gloom seemed to pervade the slave quarters? To some it seemed that, now that they were in actual possession of it, freedom was a more serious thing than they had expected to find it. Some of the slaves were seventy or eighty years old, their best days were gone. They had no strength with which to earn a living in a strange place and among strange people, even if they had been sure where to find a new place of abode. To this class the problem seemed especially hard. Besides, deep down in their hearts there was a strange and peculiar attachment to "old Master" and "old Missus," and to their children, which they found it hard to think of breaking off. With these they had spent in some cases nearly a half-century, and it was no light thing to think of parting. Gradually one by one, stealthily at first, the older slaves began to wander from the slave quarters back to the "big house" to have a whispered conversation with their former owners as to the future.

II

After the coming of freedom there were two points on which practically all the people on our place were agreed, and I find that this was generally true throughout the South: that they must change their names, and that they must leave the old plantation for at least a few days or weeks in order that they might really feel sure that they were free.

In some way a feeling got among the coloured people

that it was far from proper for them to bear the surname of their former owners, and a great many of them took other surnames. This was one of the first signs of freedom. When they were slaves, a coloured person was simply called "John" or "Susan," if he belonged to a white man by the name of "Hatcher," sometimes he was called "John Hatcher," or as often "Hatcher's John." But there was a feeling that "John Hatcher" or "Hatcher's John" was not the proper title by which to denote a freeman; and so in many cases "John Hatcher" was changed to "John S. Lincoln" or "John S. Sherman," the initial "S" standing for no name, being simply a part of what the coloured man proudly called his "entitles."

As I have stated, most of the coloured people left the old plantation for a short while at least, so as to be sure, it seemed, that they could leave and try their freedom or to see how it felt. After they had remained away for a time, many of the older slaves, especially, returned to their old homes and made some kind of contract with their former owners by which they remained on the estate.

My mother's husband, who was the stepfather of my brother John and myself, did not belong to the same owners as did my mother. In fact, he seldom came to our plantation. I remember seeing him there perhaps once a year, that being about Christmas time. In some way, during the war, by running away and following the Federal soldiers, it seems, he found his way into the new state of West Virginia. As soon as freedom was declared, he sent for my mother to come to the Kanawha Valley, in West Virginia. The journey over the mountains to West Virginia was rather a tedious and in some cases a painful undertaking. What little clothing and few household goods we had were placed in a cart, but the children walked the greater portion of the distance, which was several hundred miles.

I do not think any of us ever had been very far from the plantation, and the taking of a long journey into another state was quite an event. The parting from our for-

mer owners and the members of our own race on the plantation was a serious occasion. From the time of our parting till their death we kept up a correspondence with the older members of the family, and in later years we have kept in touch with those who were the younger members. We were several weeks making the trip, and most of the time we slept in the open air and did our cooking over a log fire out-of-doors. One night I recall that we camped near an abandoned log cabin, and my mother decided to build a fire in that for cooking, and afterward to make a "pallet" on the floor for our sleeping. Just as the fire had gotten well started a large black snake fully a yard and a half long dropped down the chimney and ran out on the floor. Of course we at once abandoned that cabin. Finally we reached our destination—a little town called Malden, which is about five miles from Charleston, the present capital of the state.

At that time salt-mining was the great industry in that part of West Virginia, and the little town of Malden was right in the midst of the salt-furnaces. My stepfather had already secured a job at a salt-furnace, and he had also secured a little cabin for us to live in. Our new house was no better than the one we had left on the old plantation in Virginia. In fact, in one respect it was worse. Notwithstanding the poor condition of our plantation cabin, we were at all times sure of pure air. Our new home was in the midst of a cluster of cabins crowded closely together, and as there were no sanitary regulations, the filth about the cabins was often intolerable. Some of our neighbours were coloured people, and some were the poorest and most ignorant and degraded white people. It was a motley mixture. Drinking, gambling, quarrels, fights, and shockingly immoral practices were frequent. All who lived in the little town were in one way or another connected with the salt business. Though I was a mere child, my stepfather put me and my brother to work in one of the furnaces. Often I began work as early as four o'clock in the morning.

The first thing I ever learned in the way of book knowledge was while working in this salt-furnace. Each salt-packer had his barrels marked with a certain number. The number allotted to my stepfather was "18." At the close of the day's work the boss of the packers would come around and put "18" on each of our barrels, and I soon learned to recognize that figure wherever I saw it, and after a while got to the point where I could make that figure, though I knew nothing about any other figures or letters.

From the time that I can remember having any thoughts about anything, I recall that I had an intense longing to learn to read. I determined, when quite a small child, that, if I accomplished nothing else in life, I would in some way get enough education to enable me to read common books and newspapers. Soon after we got settled in some manner in our new cabin in West Virginia, I induced my mother to get hold of a book for me. How or where she procured an old copy of Webster's "blue-back" spelling book, which contained the alphabet, followed by such meaningless words as "Qab," "ba," "ca," "da," I don't know. I began at once to devour this book, and I think that it was the first one I ever had in my hands. I had learned from somebody that the way to begin to read was to learn the alphabet, so I tried in all the ways I could think of to learn it,—all of course without a teacher, for I could find no one to teach me. At that time there was not a single member of my race anywhere near us who could read, and I was too timid to approach any of the white people. In some way, within a few weeks, I mastered the greater portion of the alphabet. In all my efforts to learn to read my mother shared fully my ambition, and sympathized with me and aided me in every way that she could. Though she was totally ignorant, so far as mere book knowledge was concerned, she had high ambitions for her children, and a large fund of good, hard, common sense which seemed to enable her to meet and master every situation. If I have done anything

in life worth attention, I feel sure that I inherited the disposition from my mother.

In the midst of my struggles and longing for an education, a young coloured boy who had learned to read in the state of Ohio came to Malden. As soon as the coloured people found out that he could read, a newspaper was secured and at the close of nearly every day's work this young man would be surrounded by a group of men and women who were anxious to hear him read the news contained in the papers. How I used to envy this man! He seemed to me to be the one young man in all the world who ought to be satisfied with his ambitions.

About this time the question of having some kind of a school opened for the coloured children in the village began to be discussed by members of the race. As it would be the first school for Negro children that had ever been opened in that part of Virginia, it was, of course, to be a great event, and the discussion excited the widest interest. The most perplexing question was where to find a teacher. The young man from Ohio who had learned to read the papers was considered, but his age was against him. In the midst of the discussion about a teacher, another young coloured man from Ohio, who had been a soldier, in some way found his way into town. It was soon learned that he possessed considerable education, and he was engaged by the coloured people to teach their first school. As yet no free schools had been started for coloured people in that section, hence each family agreed to pay a certain amount per month, with the understanding that the teacher was to "board 'round"—that is, spend a day with each family. This was not bad for the teacher, for each family tried to provide the very best on the day the teacher was to be its guest. I recall that I looked forward with an anxious appetite to the "teacher's day" at our little cabin.

This experience of a whole race beginning to go to school for the first time, presents one of the most interesting studies that has ever occurred in connection with the de-

velopment of any race. Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of the intense desire which the people of my race showed for an education. As I have stated, it was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn. As fast as any kind of teachers could be secured, not only were day schools filled, but night schools as well. The great ambition of the older people was to try to learn to read the Bible before they died. With this end in view, men and women who were fifty or seventy-five years old would often be found in the night school. Sunday schools were formed soon after freedom, but the principal book studied in the Sunday school was the spelling book. Day school, night school, Sunday school, were always crowded, and often many had to be turned away for want of room.

The opening of the school in the Kanawha Valley, however, brought to me one of the keenest disappointments that I ever experienced. I had been working in a salt-furnace for several months, and my stepfather had discovered that I had a financial value, and so, when the school opened, he decided that he could not spare me from my work. This decision seemed to cloud my every ambition. The disappointment was made all the more severe by reason of the fact that my place of work was where I could see the happy children passing to and from school, mornings and afternoons. Despite this disappointment, however, I determined that I would learn something, anyway. I applied myself with greater earnestness than ever to the mastering of what was in the "blue-back" speller.

My mother sympathized with me in my disappointment, and sought to comfort me in all the ways she could, and to help me find a way to learn. After a while I succeeded in making arrangements with the teacher to give me some lessons at night, after the day's work was done. These night lessons were so welcome that I think I learned more at night than the other children did during the day. My

own experiences in the night school gave me faith in the night school idea, with which, in after years, I had to do both at Hampton and Tuskegee. But my boyish heart was still set upon going to the day school and I let no opportunity slip to push my case. Finally I won, and was permitted to go to the school in the day for a few months, with the understanding that I was to rise early in the morning and work in the furnace till nine o'clock, and return immediately after school closed in the afternoon for at least two more hours of work.

The schoolhouse was some distance from the furnace, and as I had to work till nine o'clock, and the school opened at nine, I found myself in a difficulty. School would always be begun before I reached it, and sometimes my class had recited. To get around this difficulty I yielded to a temptation for which most people, I suppose, will condemn me; but since it is a fact, I might as well state it. I have great faith in the power and influence of facts. It is seldom that anything is permanently gained by holding back a fact. There was a large clock in a little office in the furnace. This clock, of course, all the hundred or more workmen depended upon to regulate their hours of beginning and ending the day's work. I got the idea that the way for me to reach school on time was to move the clock hands from half-past eight up to the nine o'clock mark. This I found myself doing morning after morning, till the furnace "boss" discovered that something was wrong, and locked the clock in a case. I did not mean to inconvenience anybody. I simply meant to reach that schoolhouse in time.

When, however, I found myself at the school for the first time, I also found myself confronted with two other difficulties. In the first place, I found that all of the other children wore hats or caps on their heads, and I had neither hat nor cap. In fact, I do not remember that up to the time of going to school I had ever worn any kind of covering upon my head, nor do I recall that either I or

anybody else had even thought anything about the need of covering for my head. But, of course, when I saw how all the other boys were dressed, I began to feel quite uncomfortable. As usual, I put the case before my mother, and she explained to me that she had no money with which to buy a "store hat," which was a rather new institution at that time among the members of my race and was considered quite the thing for young and old to own, but that she would find a way to help me out of the difficulty. She accordingly got two pieces of "homespun" (jeans) and sewed them together, and I was soon the proud possessor of my first cap.

The lesson that my mother taught me in this has always remained with me, and I have tried as best I could to teach it to others. I have always felt proud, whenever I think of the incident, that my mother had strength of character enough not to be led into the temptation of seeming to be that which she was not—of trying to impress my schoolmates and others with the fact that she was able to buy me a "store hat" when she was not. I have always felt proud that she refused to go into debt for that which she did not have the money to pay for. Since that time I have owned many kinds of caps and hats, but never one of which I have felt so proud as of the cap made of the two pieces of cloth sewed together by my mother. I have noted the fact, but without satisfaction, I need not add, that several of the boys who began their careers with "store hats" and who were my schoolmates and used to join in the sport that was made of me because I had only a "homespun" cap, have ended their careers in the penitentiary, while others are not able now to buy any kind of hat.

My second difficulty was with regard to my name, or rather *a* name. From the time when I could remember anything, I had been called simply "Booker." Before going to school it had never occurred to me that it was needful or appropriate to have an additional name. When I heard the school roll called, I noticed that all of the children had at

least two names, and some of them indulged in what seemed to me the extravagance of having three. I was in deep perplexity, because I knew that the teacher would demand of me at least two names, and I had only one. By the time the occasion came for the enrolling of my name, an idea occurred to me which I thought would make me equal to the situation; and so, when the teacher asked me what my full name was, I calmly told him "Booker Washington," as if I had been called by that name all my life; and by that name I have since been known. Later in my life I found that my mother had given me the name of "Booker Taliaferro" soon after I was born, but in some way that part of my name seemed to disappear and for a long while was forgotten, but as soon as I found out about it I revived it, and made my full name "Booker Taliaferro Washington." I think there are not many men in our country who have had the privilege of naming themselves in the way that I have.

More than once I have tried to picture myself in the position of a boy or man with an honoured and distinguished ancestry which I could trace back through a period of hundreds of years, and who had not only inherited a name, but fortune and a proud family homestead; and yet I have sometimes had the feeling that if I had inherited these, and had been a member of a more popular race, I should have been inclined to yield to the temptation of depending upon my ancestry and my colour to do that for me which I should do for myself. Years ago I resolved that because I had no ancestry myself I would leave a record of which my children would be proud, and which might encourage them to still higher effort.

The world should not pass judgment upon the Negro, and especially the Negro youth, too quickly or too harshly. The Negro boy had obstacles, discouragements, and temptations to battle with that are little known to those not situated as he is. When a white boy undertakes a task, it is taken for granted that he will succeed. On

the other hand, people are usually surprised if the Negro boy does not fail. In a word, the Negro youth starts out with the presumption against him.

The influence of ancestry, however, is important in helping forward any individual or race, if too much reliance is not placed upon it. Those who constantly direct attention to the Negro youth's moral weaknesses, and compare his advancement with that of white youths, do not consider the influence of the memories which cling about the old family homesteads. I have no idea, as I have stated elsewhere, who my grandmother was. I have, or have had, uncles and aunts and cousins, but I have no knowledge as to where most of them are. My case will illustrate that of hundreds of thousands of black people in every part of our country. The very fact that the white boy is conscious that, if he fails in life, he will disgrace the whole family record, extending back through many generations, is of tremendous value in helping him to resist temptations. The fact that the individual has behind and surrounding him proud family history and connection serves as a stimulus to help him to overcome obstacles when striving for success.

The time that I was permitted to attend school during the day was short, and my attendance was irregular. It was not long before I had to stop attending day school altogether, and devote all of my time again to work. I resorted to the night school again. In fact, the greater part of the education I secured in my boyhood was gathered through the night school after my day's work was done. I had difficulty often in securing a satisfactory teacher. Sometimes, after I had secured some one to teach me at night, I would find, much to my disappointment, that the teacher knew but little more than I did. Often I would have to walk several miles at night in order to recite my night school lessons. There was never a time in my youth, no matter how dark and discouraging the days might be, when one resolve did not continually remain with me, and

that was a determination to secure an education at any cost.

Soon after we moved to West Virginia, my mother adopted into our family, notwithstanding our poverty, an orphan boy, to whom afterward we gave the name of James B. Washington. He has ever since remained a member of the family.

After I had worked in the salt-furnace for some time, work was secured for me in a coal-mine which was operated mainly for the purpose of securing fuel for the salt-furnace. Work in the coal mine I always dreaded. One reason for this was that any one who worked in a coal mine was always unclean, at least while at work, and it was a very hard job to get one's skin clean after the day's work was over. Then it was fully a mile from the opening of the coal mine to the face of the coal, and all, of course, was in the blackest darkness. I do not believe that one ever experiences anywhere else such darkness as he does in a coal mine. The mine was divided into a large number of different "rooms" or departments, and, as I never was able to learn the location of all these "rooms," I many times found myself lost in the mine. To add to the horror of being lost, sometimes my light would go out, and then, if I did not happen to have a match, I would wander about in the darkness until by chance I found some one to give me a light. The work was not only hard, but it was dangerous. There was always danger of being blown to pieces by a premature explosion of powder, or of being crushed by falling slate. Accidents from one or the other of these causes were frequently occurring, and this kept me in constant fear. Many children of the tenderest years were compelled then, as is now true I fear, in most coal-mining districts, to spend a large part of their lives in these coal mines, with little opportunity to get an education; and, what is worse, I have often noted that, as a rule, young boys who begin life in a coal mine are often physi-

cally and mentally dwarfed. They soon lose ambition to do anything else than to continue as a coal miner.

In those days, and later as a young man, I used to try to picture in my imagination the feelings and ambitions of a white boy with absolutely no limit placed upon his aspirations and activities. I used to envy the white boy who had no obstacles placed in the way of his becoming a Congressman, Governor, Bishop, or President by reason of the accident of his birth or race. I used to picture the way that I would act under such circumstances; how I would begin at the bottom and keep rising until I reached the highest round of success.

In later years, I confess that I do not envy the white boy as I once did. I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed. Looked at from this standpoint, I almost reach the conclusion that often the Negro boy's birth and connection with an unpopular race is an advantage, so far as real life is concerned. With few exceptions, the Negro youth must work harder and must perform his tasks even better than a white youth in order to secure recognition. But out of the hard and unusual struggle through which he is compelled to pass, he gets a strength, a confidence, that one misses whose pathway is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race.

From any point of view, I had rather be what I am, a member of the Negro race, than be able to claim membership with the most favoured of any other race. I have always been made sad when I have heard members of any race claiming rights and privileges, or certain badges of distinction, on the ground simply that they were members of this or that race, regardless of their own individual worth or attainments. I have been made to feel sad for such persons because I am conscious of the fact that mere connection with what is known as a superior race will not permanently carry an individual forward, and mere con-

nection with what is regarded as an inferior race will not finally hold an individual back if he possesses intrinsic, individual merit. Every persecuted individual and race should get much consolation out of the great human law, which is universal and eternal, that merit, no matter under what skin found, is, in the long run, recognized and rewarded. This I have said here, not to call attention to myself as an individual, but to the race to which I am proud to belong.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN EX-COLOURED MAN

By JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

Among the first of my fellow-passengers of whom I took any particular notice was a tall, broad-shouldered, almost gigantic, coloured man. His dark-brown face was clean-shaven; he was well-dressed and bore a decidedly distinguished air. In fact, if he was not handsome, he at least compelled admiration for his fine physical proportions. He attracted general attention as he strode the deck in a sort of majestic loneliness. I became curious to know who he was and determined to strike up an acquaintance with him at the first opportune moment. The chance came a day or two later. He was sitting in the smoking-room, with a cigar, which had gone out, in his mouth, reading a novel. I sat down beside him and, offering him a fresh cigar, said: "You don't mind my telling you something unpleasant, do you?" He looked at me with a smile, accepted the proffered cigar, and replied in a voice which comported perfectly with his size and appearance: "I think my curiosity overcomes any objections I might have." "Well," I said, "have you noticed that the man who sat at your right in the saloon during the first meal has not sat there since?" He frowned slightly without answering my question. "Well," I continued, "he asked the steward to remove him; and not only that, he attempted to persuade a number of the passengers to protest against your presence in the dining saloon." The big man at my side took a long draw from his cigar, threw his head back, and slowly blew a great cloud of smoke toward the ceiling. Then turning to me he said: "Do you know, I don't object

to anyone's having prejudices so long as those prejudices don't interfere with my personal liberty. Now, the man you are speaking of had a perfect right to change his seat if I in any way interfered with his appetite or his digestion. I should have no reason to complain if he removed to the farthest corner of the saloon, or even if he got off the ship; but when his prejudice attempts to move *me* one foot, one inch, out of the place where I am comfortably located, then I object." On the word "object" he brought his great fist down on the table in front of us with such a crash that everyone in the room turned to look. We both covered up the slight embarrassment with a laugh and strolled out on the deck.

We walked the deck for an hour or more, discussing different phases of the Negro question. In referring to the race I used the personal pronoun "we"; my companion made no comment about it, nor evinced any surprise, except to raise his eyebrows slightly the first time he caught the significance of the word. He was the broadest-minded coloured man I have ever talked with on the Negro question. He even went so far as to sympathize with and offer excuses for some white Southern points of view. I asked him what were his main reasons for being so hopeful. He replied: "In spite of all that is written, said, and done, this great, big, incontrovertible fact stands out—the Negro is progressing, and that disproves all the arguments in the world that he is incapable of progress. I was born in slavery, and at emancipation was set adrift a ragged, penniless bit of humanity. I have seen the Negro in every grade, and I know what I am talking about. Our detractors point to the increase of crime as evidence against us; certainly we have progressed in crime as in other things; what else could be expected? And yet, in this respect, we are far from the point which has been reached by the more highly civilized white race. As we continue to progress, crime among us will gradually lose much of its brutal, vulgar, I might say healthy, aspect and become more deli-

cate, refined, and subtile. Then it will be less shocking and noticeable, although more dangerous to society." Then dropping his tone of irony, he continued with some show of eloquence: "But, above all, when I am discouraged and disheartened, I have this to fall back on: if there is a principle of right in the world, which finally prevails, and I believe that there is, if there is a merciful but justice-loving God in heaven, and I believe that there is, we shall win; for we have right on our side, while those who oppose us can defend themselves by nothing in the moral law, nor even by anything in the enlightened thought of the present age."

For several days, together with other topics, we discussed the race problem, not only of the United States, but as it affected native Africans and Jews. Finally, before we reached Boston, our conversation had grown familiar and personal. I had told him something of my past and much about my intentions for the future. I learned that he was a physician, a graduate of Howard University, Washington, and had done post-graduate work in Philadelphia; and this was his second trip abroad to attend professional courses. He had practised for some years in the city of Washington, and though he did not say so, I gathered that his practice was a lucrative one. Before we left the ship, he had made me promise that I would stop two or three days in Washington before going on south.

We put up at a hotel in Boston for a couple of days and visited several of my new friend's acquaintances; they were all people of education and culture and, apparently, of means. I could not help being struck by the great difference between them and the same class of coloured people in the South. In speech and thought they were genuine Yankees. The difference was especially noticeable in their speech. There was none of that heavy-tongued enunciation which characterizes even the best-educated coloured people of the South. It is remarkable, after all, what an adaptable creature the Negro is. I have seen the black West Indian

gentleman in London, and he is in speech and manners a perfect Englishman. I have seen natives of Haiti and Martinique in Paris, and they are more Frenchy than a Frenchman. I have no doubt that the Negro would make a good Chinaman, with the exception of the pigtail.

My stay in Washington, instead of being two or three days, was two or three weeks. This was my first visit to the national capital, and I was, of course, interested in seeing the public buildings and something of the working of the government; but most of my time I spent with the doctor among his friends and acquaintances. The social phase of life among coloured people is more developed in Washington than in any other city in the country. This is on account of the large number of individuals earning good salaries and having a reasonable amount of leisure time to draw from. There are dozens of physicians and lawyers, scores of school teachers, and hundreds of clerks in the departments. As to the coloured department clerks, I think it fair to say that in educational equipment they average above the white clerks of the same grade; for, whereas a coloured college graduate will seek such a job, the white university man goes into one of the many higher vocations which are open to him.

Among Negroes themselves, there is the peculiar inconsistency of a colour question. Its existence is rarely admitted and hardly ever mentioned; it may not be too strong a statement to say that the greater portion of the race is unconscious of its influence; yet this influence, though silent, is constant. It is evidenced most plainly in marriage selection; thus the black men generally marry women fairer than themselves; while, on the other hand, the dark women of stronger mental endowment are very often married to light-complexioned men; the effect is a tendency toward lighter complexions, especially among the more active elements in the race. Some might claim that this is a tacit admission of coloured people among themselves of their own inferiority judged by the colour line. I do not think so.

What I have termed an inconsistency is, after all, most natural; it is, in fact, a tendency in accordance with what might be called an economic necessity. So far as racial differences go, the United States puts a greater premium on colour, or, better, lack of colour, than upon anything else in the world. To paraphrase, "Have a white skin, and all things else may be added unto you." I have seen advertisements in newspapers for waiters, bell boys, or elevator men, which read: "Light coloured man wanted." It is this tremendous pressure which the sentiment of the country exerts that is operating on the race. There is involved not only the question of higher opportunity, but often the question of earning a livelihood; and so I say it is not a strange, but a natural tendency. Nor is it any more a sacrifice of self-respect that a black man should give to his children every advantage he can which complexion of the skin carries than that the new or vulgar rich should purchase for their children the advantages which ancestry, aristocracy, and social position carry. I once heard a coloured man sum it up in these words: "It's no disgrace to be black, but it's often very inconvenient."

Washington shows the Negro not only at his best, but also at his worst. As I drove 'round with the doctor, he commented rather harshly on those of the latter class which we saw. He remarked: "You see those lazy, loafing, good-for-nothing darkies; they're not worth digging graves for; yet they are the ones who create impressions of the race for the casual observer. It's because they are always in evidence on the street corners, while the rest of us are hard at work, and you know a dozen loafing darkies make a bigger crowd and a worse impression in this country than fifty white men of the same class. But they ought not to represent the race. We are the race, and the race ought to be judged by us, not by them. Every race and every nation should be judged by the best it has been able to produce, not by the worst."

The recollection of my stay in Washington is a pleasure

to me now. In company with the doctor I visited Howard University, the public schools, the excellent coloured hospital, with which he was in some way connected, if I remember correctly, and many comfortable and even elegant homes. It was with some reluctance that I continued my journey south. The doctor was very kind in giving me letters to people in Richmond and Nashville when I told him that I intended to stop in both these cities. In Richmond a man who was then editing a very creditable coloured newspaper gave me a great deal of his time and made my stay there of three or four days very pleasant. In Nashville I spent a whole day at Fisk University, the home of the "Jubilee Singers," and was more than repaid for my time. Among the letters of introduction was one to a very prosperous physician. He drove me about the city and introduced me to a number of people. From Nashville I went to Atlanta, where I stayed long enough to gratify an old desire to see Atlanta University again. I then continued my journey to Macon.

During the trip from Nashville to Atlanta, I went into the smoking compartment of the car to smoke a cigar. I was travelling in a Pullman, not because of an abundance of funds, but because through my experience with my millionaire a certain amount of comfort and luxury had become a necessity to me whenever it was obtainable. When I entered the car, I found only a couple of men there; but in a half-hour there were half a dozen or more. From the general conversation I learned that a fat Jewish-looking man was a cigar manufacturer, and was experimenting in growing Havana tobacco in Florida; that a slender bespectacled young man was from Ohio and a professor in some State institution in Alabama; that a white-moustached, well-dressed man was an old Union soldier who had fought through the Civil War; and that a tall, raw-boned, red-faced man, who seemed bent on leaving nobody in ignorance of the fact that he was from Texas, was a cotton planter.

In the North, men may ride together for hours in a "smoker" and unless they are acquainted with each other never exchange a word; in the South, men thrown together in such manner are friends in fifteen minutes. There is always present a warm-hearted cordiality which will melt down the most frigid reserve. It may be because Southerners are very much like Frenchmen in that they must talk; and not only must they talk, but they must express their opinions.

The talk in the car was for a while miscellaneous—on the weather, crops, business prospects; the old Union soldier had invested capital in Atlanta, and he predicted that that city would soon be one of the greatest in the country. Finally the conversation drifted to politics; then, as a natural sequence, turned upon the Negro question.

In the discussion of the race question the diplomacy of the Jew was something to be admired; he had the faculty of agreeing with everybody without losing his allegiance to any side. He knew that to sanction Negro oppression would be to sanction Jewish oppression and would expose him to a shot along that line from the old soldier, who stood firmly on the ground of equal rights and opportunity to all men; long traditions and business instincts told him when in Rome to act as a Roman. Altogether his position was a delicate one, and I gave him credit for the skill he displayed in maintaining it. The young professor was apologetic. He had had the same views as the G. A. R. man; but a year in the South had opened his eyes, and he had to confess that the problem could hardly be handled any better than it was being handled by the Southern whites. To which the G. A. R. man responded somewhat rudely that he had spent ten times as many years in the South as his young friend and that he could easily understand how holding a position in a State institution in Alabama would bring about a change of views. The professor turned very red and had very little more to say. The Texan was fierce, eloquent, and profane in his argu-

ment, and, in a lower sense, there was direct logic in what he said, which was convincing; it was only by taking higher ground, by dealing in what Southerners call "theories," that he could be combated. Occasionally some one of the several other men in the "smoker" would throw in a remark to reinforce what he said, but he really didn't need any help; he was sufficient in himself.

In the course of a short time, the controversy narrowed itself down to an argument between the old soldier and the Texan. The latter maintained hotly that the Civil War was a criminal mistake on the part of the North and that the humiliation which the South suffered during Reconstruction could never be forgotten. The Union man retorted just as hotly that the South was responsible for the war and that the spirit of unforgetfulness on its part was the greatest cause of present friction; that it seemed to be the one great aim of the South to convince the North that the latter made a mistake in fighting to preserve the Union and liberate the slaves. "Can you imagine," he went on to say, "what would have been the condition of things eventually if there had been no war, and the South had been allowed to follow its course? Instead of one great, prosperous country with nothing before it but the conquests of peace, a score of petty republics, as in Central and South America, wasting their energies in war with each other or in revolutions."

"Well," replied the Texan, "anything—no country at all —is better than having niggers over you. But, anyhow, the war was fought and the niggers were freed; for it's no use beating around the bush, the niggers, and not the Union, was the cause of it; and now do you believe that all the niggers on earth are worth the good white blood that was spilt? You freed the nigger and you gave him the ballot, but you couldn't make a citizen out of him. He don't know what he's voting for, and we buy 'em like so many hogs. You're giving 'em education, but that only makes slick rascals out of 'em."

"Don't fancy for a moment," said the Northern man,

"that you have any monopoly in buying ignorant votes. The same thing is done on a larger scale in New York and Boston, and in Chicago and San Francisco; and they are not black votes either. As to education's making the Negro worse, you might just as well tell me that religion does the same thing. And, by the way, how many educated coloured men do you know personally?"

The Texan admitted that he knew only one, and added that he was in the penitentiary. "But," he said, "do you mean to claim, ballot or no ballot, education or no education, that niggers are the equals of white men?"

"That's not the question," answered the other, "but if the Negro is so distinctly inferior, it is a strange thing to me that it takes such tremendous effort on the part of the white man to make him realize it, and to keep him in the same place into which inferior men naturally fall. However, let us grant for sake of argument that the Negro is inferior in every respect to the white man; that fact only increases our moral responsibility in regard to our actions toward him. Inequalities of numbers, wealth, and power, even of intelligence and morals, should make no difference in the essential rights of men."

"If he's inferior and weaker, and is shoved to the wall, that's his own look-out," said the Texan. "That's the law of nature; and he's bound to go to the wall; for no race in the world has ever been able to stand competition with the Anglo-Saxon. The Anglo-Saxon race has always been and always will be the masters of the world, and the niggers in the South ain't going to change all the records of history."

"My friend," said the old soldier slowly, "if you have studied history, will you tell me, as confidentially between white men, what the Anglo-Saxon has ever done?"

The Texan was too much astonished by the question to venture any reply.

His opponent continued: "Can you name a single one of the great fundamental and original intellectual achieve-

ments which have raised man in the scale of civilization that may be credited to the Anglo-Saxon? The art of letters, of architecture; the science of mathematics, of astronomy, of philosophy, of logic, of physics, of chemistry, the use of metals, and the principles of mechanics, were all invented or discovered by the darker and what we now call inferior races and nations. We have carried many of these to their highest point of perfection, but the foundation was laid by others. Do you know the only original contribution to civilization we can claim is what we have done in steam and electricity and in making implements of war more deadly? And there we worked largely on principles which we did not discover. Why, we didn't even originate the religion we use. We are a great race, the greatest in the world today, but we ought to remember that we are standing on a pile of past races, and enjoy our position with a little less show of arrogance. We are simply having our turn at the game, and we were a long time getting to it. After all, racial supremacy is merely a matter of dates and history. The man here who belongs to what is, all in all, the greatest race the world ever produced, is almost ashamed to own it. If the Anglo-Saxon is the source of everything good and great in the human race from the beginning, why wasn't the German forest the birthplace of civilization, rather than the valley of the Nile?"

The Texan was somewhat disconcerted, for the argument had passed a little beyond his limits, but he swung it back to where he was sure of his ground by saying: "All that may be true, but it hasn't got much to do with us and the niggers here in the South. We've got 'em here, and we've got 'em to live with, and it's a question of white man or nigger, no middle ground. You want us to treat niggers as equals. Do you want to see a mulatto South? To bring it right home to you, would you let your daughter marry a nigger?"

"No, I wouldn't consent to my daughter's marrying a nigger, but that doesn't prevent my treating a black man

fairly. And I don't see what fair treatment has to do with niggers sitting round in your parlours; they can't come there unless they're invited. Out of all the white men I know, only a hundred or so have the privilege of sitting round in my parlour. As to the mulatto South, if you Southerners have one boast that is stronger than another, it is your women; you put them on a pinnacle of purity and virtue and bow down in a chivalric worship before them; yet you talk and act as though, should you treat the Negro fairly and take the anti-intermarriage laws off your statute books, these same women would rush into the arms of black lovers and husbands. It's a wonder to me that they don't rise up and resent the insult."

"Colonel," said the Texan, as he reached into his handbag and brought out a large flask of whisky, "you might argue from now until hell freezes over, and you might convince me that you're right, but you'll never convince me that I'm wrong. All you say sounds very good, but it's got nothing to do with facts. You can say what men ought to be, but they ain't that; so there you are. Down here in the South we're up against facts, and we're meeting 'em like facts. We don't believe the nigger is or ever will be the equal of the white man, and we ain't going to treat him as an equal; I'll be damned if we will. Have a drink." Everybody except the professor partook of the generous Texan's flask, and the argument closed in a general laugh and good feeling.

I went back into the main part of the car with the conversation on my mind. Here I had before me the bald, raw, naked aspects of the race question in the South; and, in consideration of the step I was just taking, it was far from encouraging. The sentiments of the Texan—and he expressed the sentiments of the South—fell upon me like a chill. I was sick at heart. Yet I must confess that underneath it all I felt a certain sort of admiration for the man who could not be swayed from what he held as his principles. Contrasted with him, the young Ohio professor

was indeed a pitiable character. And all along, in spite of myself, I have been compelled to accord the same kind of admiration to the Southern white man for the manner in which he defends not only his virtues, but his vices. He knows that, judged by a high standard, he is narrow and prejudiced, that he is guilty of unfairness, oppression, and cruelty, but this he defends as stoutly as he would his better qualities. This same spirit obtains in a great degree among the blacks; they, too, defend their faults and failings. This they generally do whenever white people are concerned. And yet among themselves they are their own most merciless critics. I have never heard the race so terribly arraigned as I have by coloured speakers to strictly coloured audiences. It is the spirit of the South to defend everything belonging to it. The North is too cosmopolitan and tolerant for such a spirit. If you should say to an Easterner that Paris is a gayer city than New York, he would be likely to agree with you, or at least to let you have your own way; but to suggest to a South Carolinian that Boston is a nicer city to live in than Charleston would be to stir his greatest depths of argument and eloquence.

But today, as I think over that smoking-car argument, I can see it in a different light. The Texan's position does not render things so hopeless, for it indicates that the main difficulty of the race question does not lie so much in the actual condition of the blacks as it does in the mental attitude of the whites; and a mental attitude, especially one not based on the truth, can be changed more easily than actual conditions. That is to say, the burden of the question is not that the whites are struggling to save ten million despondent and moribund people from sinking into a hopeless slough of ignorance, poverty, and barbarity in their very midst, but that they are unwilling to open certain doors of opportunity and to accord certain treatment to ten million aspiring, education- and property-acquiring people. In a word, the difficulty of the problem is not so much due

to the facts presented as to the hypothesis assumed for its solution. In this it is similar to the problem of the solar system. By a complex, confusing, and almost contradictory mathematical process, by the use of zigzags instead of straight lines, the earth can be proved to be the centre of things celestial; but by an operation so simple that it can be comprehended by a schoolboy, its position can be verified among the other worlds which revolve about the sun, and its movements harmonized with the laws of the universe. So, when the white race assumes as a hypothesis that it is the main object of creation and that all things else are merely subsidiary to its well-being, sophism, subterfuge, perversion of conscience, arrogance, injustice, oppression, cruelty, sacrifice of human blood, all are required to maintain the position, and its dealings with the other races become indeed a problem, a problem, which if based on a hypothesis of common humanity, could be solved by the simple rules of justice.

When I reached Macon, I decided to leave my trunk and all my surplus belongings, to pack my bag, and strike out into the interior. This I did and by train, by mule and ox-cart, I travelled through many counties. This was my first real experience among rural coloured people, and all that I saw was interesting to me; but there was a great deal which does not require description at my hands; for log-cabins and plantations and dialect speaking "darkies" are perhaps better known in American literature than any other single picture of our national life. Indeed, they form an ideal and exclusive literary concept of the American Negro to such an extent that it is almost impossible to get the reading public to recognize him in any other setting; so I shall endeavour to avoid giving the reader any already overworked and hackneyed descriptions. This generally accepted literary ideal of the American Negro constitutes what is really an obstacle in the way of the thoughtful and progressive element of the race. His character has been established as a happy-go-lucky, laughing, shuffling, banjo-

picking being, and the reading public has not yet been prevailed upon to take him seriously. His efforts to elevate himself socially are looked upon as a sort of absurd caricature of "white civilization." A novel dealing with coloured people who lived in respectable homes and amidst a fair degree of culture and who naturally acted "just like white folks" would be taken in the position of a great comedian who gives up the lighter rôles to play tragedy. No matter how well he may portray the deeper passions the public is loath to give him up in his old character; they even conspire to make him a failure in serious work, in order to force him back into comedy. In the same respect, the public is not too much to be blamed, for great comedians are far more scarce than mediocre tragedians; every amateur actor is a tragedian. However, this very fact constitutes the opportunity of the future Negro novelist and poet to give the country something new and unknown, in depicting the life, the ambitions, the struggles, and the passions of those of their race who are striving to break the narrow limits of traditions. A beginning has already been made in that remarkable book by Dr. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Much, too, that I saw while on this trip, in spite of my enthusiasm, was disheartening. Often I thought of what my millionaire had said to me, and wished myself back in Europe. The houses in which I had to stay were generally uncomfortable, sometimes worse. I often had to sleep in a division or compartment with several other people. Once or twice I was not so unfortunate as to find divisions; everybody slept on pallets on the floor. Frequently I was able to lie down and contemplate the stars which were in their zenith. The food was at times so distasteful and poorly cooked that I could not eat it. I remember that once I lived for a week or more on buttermilk, on account of not being able to stomach the fat bacon, the rank turnip-tops, and the heavy damp mixture of meal, salt, and water, which was called corn bread. It was only my ambition to do the

work which I had planned that kept me steadfast to my purpose. Occasionally I would meet with some signs of progress and uplift in even one of these backwood settlements—houses built of boards, with windows, and divided into rooms; decent food, and a fair standard of living. This condition was due to the fact that there was in the community some exceptionally capable Negro farmer whose thrift served as an example. As I went about among these dull, simple people—great majority of them hard working; in their relations with the whites submissive, faithful, and often affectionate, negatively content with their lot—and contrasted them with those of the race who had been quickened by the forces of thought, I could not but appreciate the logic of the position held by those Southern leaders who have been bold enough to proclaim against the education of the Negro. They are consistent in their public speech with Southern sentiment and desires. Those public men of the South who have not been daring or heedless enough to defy the ideals of twentieth-century civilization and of modern humanitarianism and philanthropy, find themselves in the embarrassing situation of preaching one thing and praying for another. They are in the position of the fashionable woman who is compelled by the laws of polite society to say to her dearest enemy: "How happy I am to see you!"

And yet in this respect how perplexing is Southern character; for, in opposition to the above, it may be said that the claim of the Southern whites that they love the Negro better than the Northern whites do is in a manner true. Northern white people love the Negro in a sort of abstract way, as a race; through a sense of justice, charity, and philanthropy, they will liberally assist in his elevation. A number of them have heroically spent their lives in this effort (and just here I wish to say that when the coloured people reach the monument-building stage, they should not forget the men and women who went South after the war and founded schools for them). Yet, generally speaking,

they have no particular liking for individuals of the race. Southern white people despise the Negro as a race, and will do nothing to aid in his elevation as such; but for certain individuals they have a strong affection, and are helpful to them in many ways. With these individual members of the race they live on terms of the greatest intimacy; they entrust to them their children, their family treasures, and their family secrets; in trouble they often go to them for comfort and counsel; in sickness they often rely upon their care. This affectionate relation between the Southern whites and those blacks who come into close touch with them has not been overdrawn even in fiction.

This perplexity of Southern character extends even to the intermixture of the races. That is spoken of as though it were dreaded worse than smallpox, leprosy, or the plague. Yet, when I was in Jacksonville, I knew several prominent families there with large coloured branches, which went by the same name and were known and acknowledged as blood relatives. And what is more, there seemed to exist between these black brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts a decidedly friendly feeling.

I said above that Southern whites would do nothing for the Negro as a race. I know the South claims that it has spent millions for the education of the blacks, and that it has of its own free will shouldered this awful burden. It seems to be forgetful of the fact that these millions have been taken from the public tax funds for education, and that the law of political economy which recognizes the land-owner as the one who really pays the taxes is not tenable. It would be just as reasonable for the relatively few land-owners of Manhattan to complain that they had to stand the financial burden of the education of the thousands and thousands of children whose parents pay rent for tenements and flats. Let the millions of producing and consuming Negroes be taken out of the South, and it would be quickly seen how much less of public funds there would be to appropriate for education or any other purpose.

In thus travelling about through the country I was sometimes amused on arriving at some little railroad-station town to be taken for and treated as a white man, and six hours later, when it was learned that I was stopping at the house of the coloured preacher or school teacher, to note the attitude of the whole town change. At times this led even to embarrassment. Yet it cannot be so embarrassing for a coloured man to be taken for white as for a white man to be taken for coloured and I have heard of several cases of the latter kind.

All this while I was gathering material for work, jotting down in my note-book themes and melodies, and trying to catch the spirit of the Negro in his relatively primitive state. I began to feel the necessity of hurrying so that I might get back to some city like Nashville to begin my compositions and at the same time earn at least a living by teaching and performing before my funds gave out. At the last settlement in which I stopped I found a mine of material. This was due to the fact that a "big meeting" was in progress. "Big meeting" is an institution something like camp meeting, the difference being that it is held in a permanent church, and not in a temporary structure. All the churches of some one denomination—of course, either Methodist or Baptist—in a county, or, perhaps, in several adjoining counties, are closed, and the congregations unite at some centrally located church for a series of meetings lasting a week. It is really a social as well as a religious function. The people come in great numbers, making the trip, according to their financial status, in buggies drawn by sleek, fleet-footed mules, in ox-carts, or on foot. It was amusing to see some of the latter class trudging down the hot and dusty road, with their shoes, which were brand new, strung across their shoulders. When they got near the church, they sat on the side of the road and with many grimaces, tenderly packed their feet into those instruments of torture. This furnished, indeed, a trying test of their religion. The famous preachers come from near and far and take turns in

warning sinners of the day of wrath. Food, in the form of those two Southern luxuries, fried chicken and roast pork, is plentiful, and no one need go hungry. On the opening Sunday the women are immaculate in starched stiff white dresses adorned with ribbons, either red or blue. Even a great many of the men wear streamers of vari-coloured ribbons in the buttonholes of their coats. A few of them carefully cultivate a forelock of hair by wrapping it in twine, and on such festive occasions decorate it with a narrow ribbon streamer. Big meetings afford a fine opportunity to the younger people to meet each other dressed in their Sunday clothes, and much rustic courting, which is as enjoyable as any other kind, is indulged in.

The big meeting which I was lucky enough to catch was particularly well attended; the extra large attendance was due principally to two attractions, a man by the name of John Brown, who was renowned as the most powerful preacher for miles around; and a wonderful leader of singing, who was known as "Singing Johnson." These two men were a study and a revelation to me. They caused me to reflect upon how great an influence their types have been in the development of the Negro in America. Both these types are now looked upon generally with condescension or contempt by the progressive element among the coloured people; but it should never be forgotten that it was they who led the race from paganism and kept it steadfast to Christianity through all the long, dark years of slavery.

John Brown was a jet-black man of medium size, with a strikingly intelligent head and face, and a voice like an organ peal. He preached each night after several lesser lights had successively held the pulpit during an hour or so. As far as subject-matter is concerned, all of the sermons were alike: each began with the fall of man, ran through various trials and tribulations of the Hebrew children, on to the redemption by Christ, and ended with a fervid picture of the judgment day and the fate of the damned. But

John Brown possessed magnetism and an imagination so free and daring that he was able to carry through what the other preachers would not attempt. He knew all the arts and tricks of oratory, the modulation of the voice to almost a whisper, the pause for effect, the rise through light, rapid-fire sentences to the terrific thundering outburst of an electrifying climax. In addition, he had the intuition of a born theatrical manager. Night after night this man held me fascinated. He convinced me that, after all, eloquence consists more in the manner of saying than in what is said. It is largely a matter of tone pictures.

The most striking example of John Brown's magnetism and imagination was his "heavenly march"; I shall never forget how it impressed me when I heard it. He opened his sermon in the usual way; then, proclaiming to his listeners that he was going to take them on the heavenly march, he seized the Bible under his arm and began to pace up and down the pulpit platform. The congregation immediately began with their feet a tramp, tramp, tramp, in time with the preacher's march in the pulpit, all the while singing in an undertone a hymn about marching to Zion. Suddenly he cried "Halt!" Every foot stopped with the precision of a company of well-drilled soldiers, and the singing ceased. The morning star had been reached. Here the preacher described the beauties of that celestial body. Then the march, the tramp, tramp, tramp, and the singing were again taken up. Another "Halt!" They had reached the evening star. And so on, past the sun and moon—the intensity of the religious emotion all the time increasing—along the milky way, on up to the gates of heaven. Here the halt was longer, and the preacher described at length the gates and walls of the New Jerusalem. Then he took his hearers through the pearly gates, along the golden streets, pointing out the glories of the city, pausing occasionally to greet some patriarchal members of the church, well-known to most of his listeners in life, who had had "the tears wiped from their eyes, were clad in

robes of spotless white, with crowns of gold upon their heads and harps within their hands," and ended his march before the great white throne. To the reader this may sound ridiculous, but listened to under the circumstances, it was highly and effectively dramatic. I was a more or less sophisticated and non-religious man of the world, but the torrent of the preacher's words, moving with the rhythm and glowing with the eloquence of primitive poetry, swept me along, and I, too, felt like joining in the shouts of "Amen! Hallelujah!"

John Brown's powers in describing the delights of heaven were no greater than those in depicting the horrors of hell. I saw great, strapping fellows trembling and weeping like children at the "mourners' bench." His warnings to sinners were truly terrible. I shall never forget one expression that he used, which for originality and aptness could not be excelled. In my opinion, it is more graphic and, for us, far more expressive than St. Paul's "It is hard to kick against the pricks." He struck the attitude of a pugilist and thundered out, "Young man, your arm's too short to box with God!"

Interesting as was John Brown to me, the other man, "Singing Johnson," was more so. He was a small, dark-brown, one-eyed man, with a clear, strong, high-pitched voice, a leader of singing, a maker of songs, a man who could improvise at the moment lines to fit the occasion. Not so striking a figure as John Brown, but, at "big meetings," equally important. It is indispensable to the success of the singing, when the congregation is a large one made up of people from different communities, to have someone with a strong voice who knows just what hymn to sing and when to sing it, who can pitch it in the right key, and who has all the leading lines committed to memory. Sometimes it devolves upon the leader to "sing down" a long-winded or uninteresting speaker. Committing to memory the leading lines of all the Negro spiritual songs is no easy task, for they run up into the hundreds. But the

accomplished leader must know them all, because the congregation sings only the refrains and repeats; every ear in the church is fixed upon him, and if he becomes mixed in his lines or forgets them, the responsibility falls directly on his shoulders.

For example, most of these hymns are constructed to be sung in the following manner:

Leader: Swing low, sweet chariot.
Congregation: Coming for to carry me home.
Leader: Swing low, sweet chariot.
Congregation: Coming for to carry me home.
Leader: I look over yonder, what do I see?
Congregation: Coming for to carry me home.
Leader: Two little angels coming after me.
Congregation: Coming for to carry me home. . . .

The solitary and plaintive voice of the leader is answered by a sound like the roll of the sea, producing a most curious effect.

In only a few of these songs do the leader and the congregation start off together. Such a song is the well-known "Steal Away to Jesus."

The leader and the congregation begin with part-singing:

Steal away, steal away,
Steal away to Jesus;
Steal away, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here.

Then the leader alone or the congregation in unison:

My Lord he calls me,
He calls me by the thunder,
The trumpet sounds within-a
my soul.

Then all together:

I ain't got long to stay here.

The leader and the congregation again take up the opening refrain; then the leader sings three more leading lines alone, and so on almost *ad infinitum*. It will be seen that even here most of the work falls upon the leader, for the congregation sings the same lines over and over, while his memory and ingenuity are taxed to keep the songs going.

Generally the parts taken up by the congregation are sung in a three-part harmony, the women singing the soprano and a transposed tenor, the men with high voices singing the melody, and those with low voices a thundering bass. In a few of these songs, however, the leading part is sung in unison by the whole congregation, down to the last line, which is harmonized. The effect of this is intensely thrilling. Such a hymn is "Go Down, Moses." It stirs the heart like a trumpet-call.

"Singing Johnson" was an ideal leader, and his services were in great demand. He spent his time going about the country from one church to another. He received his support in much the same way as the preachers—part of a collection, food and lodging. All of his leisure time he devoted to originating new words and melodies and new lines for old songs. He always sang with his eyes—or, to be more exact, his eye—closed, indicating the *tempo* by swinging his head to and fro. He was a great judge of the proper hymn to sing at a particular moment; and I noticed several times, when the preacher reached a certain climax, or expressed a certain sentiment, that Johnson broke in with a line or two of some appropriate hymn. The speaker understood and would pause until the singing ceased.

As I listened to the singing of these songs, the wonder of their production grew upon me more and more. How did the men who originated them manage to do it? The sentiments are easily accounted for; they are mostly taken from the Bible; but the melodies, where did they come from? Some of them so weirdly sweet, and others so wonderfully strong. Take, for instance, "Go down, Moses." I doubt that there is a stronger theme in the whole musical

literature of the world. And so many of these songs contain more than mere melody; there is sounded in them that elusive undertone, the note in music which is not heard with the ears. I sat often with the tears rolling down my cheeks and my heart melted within me. Any musical person who has never heard a Negro congregation under the spell of religious fervour sing these old songs has missed one of the most thrilling emotions which the human heart may experience. Anyone who, without shedding tears, can listen to Negroes sing "Nobody knows de trouble I see, Nobody knows but Jesus" must indeed have a heart of stone.

As yet, the Negroes themselves do not fully appreciate these old slave songs. The educated classes are rather ashamed of them and prefer to sing hymns from books. This feeling is natural; they are still too close to the conditions under which the songs were produced; but the day will come when this slave music will be the most treasured heritage of the American Negro.

At the close of the "big meeting" I left the settlement where it was being held, full of enthusiasm. I was in that frame of mind which, in the artistic temperament, amounts to inspiration. I was now ready and anxious to get to some place where I might settle down to work, and give expression to the ideas which were teeming in my head; but I strayed into another deviation from my path of life as I had it marked out, which led me upon an entirely different road. Instead of going to the nearest and most convenient railroad station, I accepted the invitation of a young man who had been present the closing Sunday at the meeting to drive with him some miles farther to the town in which he taught school, and there take the train. My conversation with this young man as we drove along through the country was extremely interesting. He had been a student in one of the Negro colleges—strange coincidence, in the very college, as I learned through him, in which "Shiny" was now a professor. I was, of course, curious to hear about my boyhood friend; and had it not been

vacation time, and that I was not sure that I should find him, I should have gone out of my way to pay him a visit; but I determined to write to him as soon as the school opened. My companion talked to me about his work among the people, of his hopes and his discouragements. He was tremendously in earnest; I might say, too much so. In fact, it may be said that the majority of intelligent coloured people are, in some degree, too much in earnest over the race question. They assume and carry so much that their progress is at times impeded and they are unable to see things in their proper proportions. In many instances a slight exercise of the sense of humour would save much anxiety of soul. Anyone who marks the general tone of editorials in coloured newspapers is apt to be impressed with this idea. If the mass of Negroes took their present and future as seriously as do the most of their leaders, the race would be in no mental condition to sustain the terrible pressure which it undergoes; it would sink of its own weight. Yet it must be acknowledged that in the making of a race over-seriousness is a far lesser failing than its reverse, and even the faults resulting from it lean toward the right.

We drove into the town just before dark. As we passed a large, unpainted church, my companion pointed it out as the place where he held his school. I promised that I would go there with him the next morning and visit awhile. The town was of that kind which hardly requires or deserves description; a straggling line of brick and wooden stores on one side of the railroad track and some cottages of various sizes on the other side constituted about the whole of it. The young school teacher boarded at the best house in the place, owned by a coloured man. It was painted, had glass windows, contained "store bought" furniture, an organ, and lamps with chimneys. The owner held a job of some kind on the railroad. After supper it was not long before everybody was sleepy. I occupied the room with the school teacher. In a few minutes after we got into the room he

was in bed and asleep; but I took advantage of the unusual luxury of a lamp which gave light and sat looking over my notes and jotting down some ideas which were still fresh in my mind. Suddenly I became conscious of that sense of alarm which is always aroused by the sound of hurrying footsteps on the silence of the night. I stopped work and looked at my watch. It was after eleven. I listened, straining every nerve to hear above the tumult of my quickening pulse. I caught the murmur of voices, then the gallop of a horse, then of another and another. Now thoroughly alarmed, I woke my companion, and together we both listened. After a moment he put out the light and softly opened the window-blind, and we cautiously peeped out. We saw men moving in one direction, and from the mutterings we vaguely caught the rumour that some terrible crime had been committed. I put on my coat and hat. My friend did all in his power to dissuade me from venturing out, but it was impossible for me to remain in the house under such tense excitement. My nerves would not have stood it. Perhaps what bravery I exercised in going out was due to the fact that I felt sure my identity as a coloured man had not yet become known in the town.

I went out and, following the drift, reached the railroad station. There was gathered there a crowd of men, all white, and others were steadily arriving, seemingly from all the surrounding country. How did the news spread so quickly? I watched these men moving under the yellow glare of the kerosene lamps about the station, stern, comparatively silent, all of them armed, some of them in boots and spurs; fierce, determined men. I had come to know the type well: blond, tall and lean, with ragged moustache and beard, and glittering grey eyes. At the first suggestion of daylight they began to disperse in groups, going in several directions. There was no extra noise or excitement, no loud talking, only swift, sharp words of command given by those who seemed to be accepted as leaders by mutual understanding. In fact, the impression made upon me was

that everything was being done in quite an orderly manner. In spite of so many leaving, the crowd around the station continued to grow; at sunrise there were a great many women and children. By this time I also noticed some coloured people; a few seemed to be going about customary tasks; several were standing on the outskirts of the crowd; but the gathering of Negroes, usually seen in such towns, was missing.

Before noon they brought him in. Two horsemen rode abreast; between them, half dragged, the poor wretch made his way through the dust. His hands were tied behind him, and ropes round his body were fastened to the saddle horns of his double guard. The men who at midnight had been stern and silent were now emitting that terror-instilling sound known as the "rebel yell." A space was quickly cleared in the crowd, and a rope placed about his neck, when from somewhere came the suggestion, "Burn him!" It ran like an electric current. Have you ever witnessed the transformation of human beings into savage beasts? Nothing can be more terrible. A railroad tie was sunk into the ground, the rope was removed, and a chain brought and securely coiled round the victim and the stake. There he stood, a man only in form and stature, every sign of degeneracy stamped upon his countenance. His eyes were dull and vacant, indicating not a single ray of thought. Evidently the realization of his fearful fate had robbed him of whatever reasoning power he had ever possessed. He was too stunned and stupefied even to tremble. Fuel was brought from everywhere: oil, the torch; the flames crouched for an instant as though to gather strength, then leaped up as high as their victim's head. He squirmed, he writhed, strained at his chains, then gave out cries and groans that I shall always hear. The cries and groans were choked off by the fire and smoke; but his eyes, bulging from their sockets, rolled from side to side, appealing in vain for help. Some of the crowd yelled and cheered, others seemed appalled at what they had done, and there were those who

turned away sickened at the sight. I was fixed to the spot where I stood, powerless to take my eyes from what I did not want to see.

It was over before I realized that time had elapsed. Before I could make myself believe that what I saw was really happening, I was looking at a scorched post, a smouldering fire, blackened bones, charred fragments sifting down through coils of chains; and the smell of burnt flesh—human flesh—was in my nostrils.

I walked a short distance away and sat down in order to clear my dazed mind. A great wave of humiliation and shame swept over me. Shame that I belonged to a race that could be so dealt with; and shame for my country, that it, the great example of democracy to the world, should be the only civilized, if not the only state on earth, where a human being would be burned alive. My heart turned bitter within me. I could understand why Negroes are led to sympathize with even their worst criminals and to protect them when possible. By all the impulses of normal human nature they can and should do nothing less.

Whenever I hear protests from the South that it should be left alone to deal with the Negro question, my thoughts go back to that scene of brutality and savagery. I do not see how a people that can find in its conscience any excuse whatever for slowly burning to death a human being, or for tolerating such an act, can be entrusted with the salvation of a race. Of course, there are in the South men of liberal thought who do not approve lynching, but I wonder how long they will endure the limits which are placed upon free speech. They still cower and tremble before "Southern opinion." Even so late as the recent Atlanta riot those men who were brave enough to speak a word in behalf of justice and humanity felt called upon, by way of apology, to preface what they said with a glowing rhetorical tribute to the Anglo-Saxon's superiority and to refer to the "great and impassable gulf" between the races "fixed by the Creator at the foundation of the world." The ques-

tion of the relative qualities of the two races is still an open one. The reference to the "great gulf" loses force in face of the fact that there are in this country perhaps three or four million people with the blood of both races in their veins; but I fail to see the pertinency of either statement subsequent to the beating and murdering of scores of innocent people in the streets of a civilized and Christian city.

The Southern whites are in many respects a great people. Looked at from a certain point of view, they are picturesque. If one will put oneself in a romantic frame of mind, one can admire their notions of chivalry and bravery and justice. In this same frame of mind an intelligent man can go to the theatre and applaud the impossible hero, who with his single sword slays everybody in the play except the equally impossible heroine. So can an ordinary peace-loving citizen sit by a comfortable fire and read with enjoyment of the bloody deeds of pirates and the fierce brutality of vikings. This is the way in which we gratify the old, underlying animal instincts and passions; but we should shudder with horror at the mere idea of such practices being realities in this day of enlightened and humanitarianized thought. The Southern whites are not yet living quite in the present age; many of their general ideas hark back to a former century, some of them to the Dark Ages. In the light of other days they are sometimes magnificent. Today they are often cruel and ludicrous.

How long I sat with bitter thoughts running through my mind I do not know; perhaps an hour or more. When I decided to get up and go back to the house, I found that I could hardly stand on my feet. I was as weak as a man who had lost blood. However, I dragged myself along, with the central idea of a general plan well fixed in my mind. I did not find my school teacher friend at home, so I did not see him again. I swallowed a few mouthfuls of food, packed my bag, and caught the afternoon train.

When I reached Macon, I stopped only long enough to get the main part of my luggage and to buy a ticket for

New York. All along the journey I was occupied in debating with myself the step which I had decided to take. I argued that to forsake one's race to better one's condition was no less worthy an action than to forsake one's country for the same purpose. I finally made up my mind that I would neither disclaim the black race nor claim the white race; but that I would change my name, raise a moustache, and let the world take me for what it would; that it was not necessary for me to go about while I understood that it was not discouragement or fear or search for a larger field of action and opportunity that was driving me out of the Negro race. I knew that it was shame, unbearable shame. Shame at being identified with a people that could with impunity be treated worse than animals. For certainly the law would restrain and punish the malicious burning alive of animals.

So once again I found myself gazing at the towers of New York and wondering what future that city held in store for me.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Lewis Alexander was born in Washington in 1900. He studied at Howard University and at the University of Pennsylvania. He has been both actor and editor. His poems have appeared in *Opportunity* and in the *Carolina Magazine.*

James Bell was born in Gallipolis, Ohio, in 1826. He was one of the leaders of the anti-slavery agitation, and a great friend of John Brown.

Gwendolyn B. Bennett was born in Giddings, Texas, in 1902. In 1924, she was graduated from Pratt Institute, and became a teacher at Howard University. During 1925 and 1926, she studied art in Paris.

William Stanley Braithwaite was born in Boston, December 6, 1878. For many years he has been a reviewer for the *Boston Transcript.* He has edited many collections of poems. His best known work is his yearly anthology of magazine verse.

Benjamin Brawley was born in Columbia, S. C., in 1882. He has studied at Morehouse College, University of Chicago, and received his Master's degree at Harvard University. Since 1923 he has been professor of English at Shaw University, Raleigh, N. C. In 1920 he traveled along the West Coast of Africa studying social and educational conditions. He is the author of many books on English literature, and is a frequent contributor to our leading magazines. Among his works are: *A Short History of the American Negro, The Negro in Literature and Art, A Short History of the English Drama,* and *A New Survey of English Literature.*

Sterling A. Brown was born in Washington, May 1, 1901. He was graduated from Williams College in 1922 and received his degree of Master of Arts at Harvard in 1923. He is now teaching at Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Mo. His poems and reviews have appeared in *Opportunity.*

Charles Waddell Chesnutt was born in Cleveland in 1856. He was a teacher in North Carolina, and principal of the State Normal School at Fayetteville for several years. In 1887, he was admitted to the bar in Cleveland and practiced there. His novels and stories are widely read. Chief among them are *The Conjure Woman, The House Behind the Cedars,* and *The Colonel's Dream.*

James D. Corrothers, 1869-1919. Born in Cass County, Michigan. Student in Northwestern University, minister and poet. Many of his poems appeared in the *Century Magazine.*

Joseph S. Cotter, Sr. was born in Nelson County, Kentucky, February 2, 1861. He received only a grammar school education and that only after great difficulty. For a while he was a day laborer, and later on a teacher. His published works are *A Rhyming, Links of Friendship, Caleb, the Degenerate, A White Song and a Black One,* and *Negro Tales.*

Countee Cullen was born in New York City, May, 1903. He studied at New York University, where he received his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and at Harvard where he received his M.A. He has served as Assistant Editor of *Opportunity,* but is now studying in France. His published works are *Color, The Ballad of a Brown Girl,* and *Copper Sun.*

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born at Great Barrington, Mass. He was educated at Fisk University, Harvard, and Berlin. From 1896 to 1910 he was professor of Economics and History at Atlanta University. Since 1910 he has been Director of Publicity, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Editor of *The Crisis.* He is the author of numerous sociological studies, stories and novels, among the most significant of which are *The Suppression of the Slave Trade, The Souls of Black Folk, John Brown, a Biography, Darkwater, The Negro,* and *The Dark Princess.*

Frederick Douglass, perhaps the greatest Negro America has produced, was born in Talbott County, Maryland, about 1817. He was reared in slavery, made a thrilling escape in 1838, and devoted his genius to agitation for the Abolitionists. He was a great orator and was as well known

and liked in both England and America as were Garrison, Henry Ward Beecher, and Wendell Phillips. He was U. S. Marshal of the District of Columbia under President Hayes, and later became Minister to Haiti.

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in Dayton, Ohio, June 27, 1872. He was graduated from the Dayton High School where he edited the school paper. His first book was *Oak and Ivy,* 1893. Later books were *Majors and Minors, Lyrics of Lowly Life, Lyrics of the Hearthside, Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow;* short stories: *Folks from Dixie* and *The Strength of Gideon;* novels: *The Uncalled, The Fanatics, The Love of Landry, The Sport of the Gods.* Dunbar died in Dayton, February 9, 1906.

Jessie Fauset was born in Philadelphia. She is a graduate of Cornell University and received her Master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania. She has studied at the Collège de France. Besides her poems she has written two novels, *There Is Confusion* and *Plum Bun.*

Rudolph Fisher was born in Washington, 1897. He received his B.A. and M.A. at Brown University, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. In 1924 he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine at Howard University. His short stories have appeared in many magazines and his first novel, *Walls of Jericho,* was published in 1928.

E. Franklin Frazier was born in Baltimore, 1894. He received his education at Howard University and at Clark University. In 1921-22, he held the American Scandinavian Foundation Fellowship and studied in Denmark. He is at present director of the Atlanta School of Social Work. His essays on social problems have appeared in *The Crisis, Opportunity, The Modern Quarterly,* and other periodicals.

Angelina Weld Grimké was born in Boston, February 27, 1880. She was graduated from the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics. At present she is a teacher in the Dunbar High School, Washington. She has published a play, *Rachel,* and many short stories and poems.

Frances E. Harper was born in Baltimore of free parents in 1825. She was educated in the public schools of the city. Her first poems were published in 1864 in celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation. She died in Baltimore in 1911.

Abram L. Harris was born in Richmond, 1899. After studying at the Virginia Union University and New York University, he received the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Pittsburgh in 1924. He was Professor of Social Economy at the West Virginia Collegiate Institute for one year and was Executive Secretary of the Minneapolis Urban League 1925-1926. At present he is Professor of Economics at Howard University. His essays on social and economic problems have appeared in *Current History, The Journal of Social Forces, The Modern Quarterly, Opportunity,* and *The Crisis.*

Frank Horne was born in New York City, August 18, 1899. He studied at the College of the City of New York and at the Northern Illinois College of Ophthalmology. His poems have appeared in *Opportunity, The Crisis,* and in *Braithwaite's Anthology.*

Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, 1902. He studied at Columbia University for a year, then for two years traveled as a member of the crew of freight steamers between Europe and Africa. He is now a student at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania. Two volumes of his poems have appeared, *The Weary Blues,* and *Fine Clothes to the Jew.*

Charles S. Johnson was born in Bristol, Virginia, 1893. He studied at the Virginia Union University and the University of Chicago, where he did graduate work in social science. He was Associate Secretary of the Chicago Race Relations Commission, and contributed to their report *The Negro in Chicago.* In 1921 he was made director of Research and Publicity, National Urban League, and Editor of *Opportunity.*

Fenton Johnson was born in Chicago, May, 1888. He was educated in Chicago. His chief interest is poetry, of which he has published three volumes, *A Little Dreaming, Visions of the Dusk,* and *Songs of the Soil.* His poems have appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies.

Georgia Douglas Johnson was born in Atlanta in 1886. She studied at Oberlin College. Her poems have appeared in *The Liberator, The Crisis, Opportunity,* and *The Worker's Monthly.* Two volumes, *The Heart of a Woman* and *Bronze,* have appeared.

James Weldon Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida, 1872. He was graduated from Atlanta University and did graduate work there and at Columbia University. From 1906-1909 he was the United States Consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua. At present he is the Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and trustee of Atlanta University. His published works include *The Autobiography of an Ex-coloured Man, Fifty Years and Other Poems, The Book of American Negro Poetry, Second Book of Negro Spirituals,* and *God's Trombones.*

Alain Locke was born in Philadelphia, 1886. He received his bachelor's degree at Harvard in 1907, and won the Rhodes Scholarship for Pennsylvania. After three years at Oxford, he spent one at the University of Berlin. In 1918, he received his degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Howard University. He is Professor of Philosophy at Howard. He is the author of *Race Contacts and Inter-racial Relations,* published in 1916, and various articles on social problems have appeared in periodicals. In 1925 Dr. Locke edited the Harlem Number of *Survey Graphic.*

Claude McKay was born in Jamaica, 1889. In 1912, he came to the United States and studied at the University of Kansas for two years. He went to Russia in 1921 and has lived abroad for several years. He is best known for his poems, particularly *Harlem Shadows,* 1922. His first novel, *Home to Harlem,* was published in 1928.

John Frederick Matheus was born September 10, 1887, at Keyser, West Virginia. He is a graduate of Western Reserve University and received his M.A. at Columbia University. At present he is Professor of Romance Languages at West Virginia Collegiate Institute. He is a winner of prizes in the annual contests of *Opportunity* and *The Crisis.*

Kelly Miller was born in Winnsboro, South Carolina, in 1893. He was educated at Howard University and at Johns Hopkins University. He is Professor of Sociology at Howard University and Dean of the Junior College. He has written numerous monographs and pamphlets on education and race questions, and has published *Race Adjustment,* 1909, *The Appeal to Conscience,* 1918, and *The Everlasting Stain,* 1924.

Arthur Schomburg was born in San Juan, Porto Rico. He was educated at the Saint Thomas College. In 1891, he came to the United States. He is president of the American Negro Academy and cofounder of the Negro Society for Historical Research. He is the author of numerous historical pamphlets.

George Schuyler was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1895. He was educated in the public schools of Syracuse, New York. From 1912 to 1918 he served in the United States Army, attaining the rank of First Lieutenant. In 1926 he became Assistant Editor of *The Messenger,* where he did significant work. His articles on the race problem have appeared in *The Nation, The New Masses, World Tomorrow,* and the *Pittsburgh Courier.*

Wallace Thurman was born in Salt Lake City in 1902. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California. In 1925 he became a member of the editorial staff of *The Messenger* and the *World Tomorrow.* He recently launched the new Negro magazine *Harlem* and is the author of the novel: *Blacker-the-Berry* which also appeared on the stage, in adapted form, as *Harlem.*

Jean Toomer was born in Washington, 1894, and received his education in the public schools. After teaching a short while, he devoted his time to writing. He now lives in New York. His first book was *Cane,* 1923.

Eric Walrond was born in British Guiana in 1898. He received his education in Colon, at the College of the City of New York, and at Columbia. He is of the staff of *Opportunity.* Besides numerous contributions to magazines, he has published *Tropic Death.*

Booker T. Washington was born at Hales Ford, Virginia, in 1858. He was born in slavery. His parents moved to West Virginia after the War, and he worked in the coal mines as a child. He became a student at Hampton and founded the Tuskegee Institute, modeled after Hampton. Until his death in 1915, he was the acknowledged leader of his race. He was educator, author, publicist, and orator.

Charles Harris Wesley was born in Louisville, 1891. He was educated at Fisk University, Yale University, and has studied at Harvard and in Paris. He has been head of the Department of History at Howard University since

1921. He has contributed widely to periodicals on questions relating to the history of the Negro in the United States.

Phyllis Wheatley was born in Africa. She was carried to Boston with a shipload of slaves in 1761 and was bought by John Wheatley. His wife became very deeply interested in her and taught her. Her first poems were published in London, where she was lionized. One of her best-known poems is in honor of Washington.

Walter White was born in Atlanta, and was educated at Atlanta University. Since 1918 he has been Assistant Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and has done significant work in investigating lynchings and race riots. He is a contributor to many periodicals, and has published two novels, *Fire in the Flint* and *Flight* and a social study of lynching: *Rope and Faggot.*

Albert A. Whitman was born in Kentucky in 1857. He was a Methodist minister. His first poems were published in 1877, *The Rape of Florida* in 1884.

Carter G. Woodson was born in Buckingham County, Virginia, in 1875. He studied at Berea College, Kentucky, and received his B.A. and M.A. at the University of Chicago. He studied at the Sorbonne, and in 1912 received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Harvard University. He has traveled widely in Europe, Asia, and Africa. He taught for many years, but his most valuable work has been the founding and editing of the *Journal of Negro History,* which since 1916 has been doing notable research in the history of the Negro.

THE END

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ANDERSON, SHERWOOD	Winesburg, Ohio 104
ANDREYEV, LEONID	The Seven That Were Hanged, and the Red Laugh 45
APULEIUS, LUCIUS	The Golden Ass 88
BALZAC	Short Stories 40
BAUDELAIRE	Prose and Poetry 70
BEARDSLEY, AUBREY	64 Reproductions 42
BEEBE, WILLIAM	Jungle Peace 30
BEERBOHM, MAX	Zuleika Dobson 116
BIERCE, AMBROSE	In the Midst of Life 133
BLAKE, WILLIAM	Poems 91
BRONTE, EMILY	Wuthering Heights 106
BROWN, GEO. DOUGLAS	The House with the Green Shutters 129
BUTLER, SAMUEL	Erewhon 136
BUTLER, SAMUEL	The Way of All Flesh 13
CABELL, JAMES BRANCH	Beyond Life 25
CABELL, JAMES BRANCH	The Cream of the Jest 126
CARPENTER, EDWARD	Love's Coming of Age 51
CARROLL, LEWIS	Alice in Wonderland, etc. 79
CASANOVA, JACQUES	Memoirs of Casanova 165
CELLINI, BENVENUTO	Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini 3
CHAUCER	The Canterbury Tales 161
CHEKHOV, ANTON	Rothschild's Fiddle, etc. 31
CHESTERTON, G. K.	Man Who Was Thursday 35
CRANE, STEPHEN	Men, Women and Boats 102
D'ANNUNZIO, GABRIELE	Flame of Life 65
D'ANNUNZIO, GABRIELE	The Child of Pleasure 98
D'ANNUNZIO, GABRIELE	The Triumph of Death 112
DAUDET, ALPHONSE	Sappho 85
DEFOE, DANIEL	Moll Flanders 122
DOSTOYEVSKY, FYODOR	The Brothers Karamazov 151
DOSTOYEVSKY, FYODOR	Poor People 10
DOUGLAS, NORMAN	Old Calabria 141
DOUGLAS, NORMAN	South Wind 5
DOWSON, ERNEST	Poems and Prose 74
DREISER, THEODORE	Free, and Other Stories 50

AUTHOR	TITLE AND NUMBER
DREISER, THEODORE	Twelve Men 148
DUMAS, ALEXANDRE	Camille 69
DUMAS, ALEXANDRE	The Three Musketeers 143
DUNSANY, LORD	A Dreamer's Tales 34
DUNSANY, LORD	Book of Wonder 43
ELLIS, HAVELOCK	The Dance of Life 160
ELLIS, HAVELOCK	The New Spirit 95
FABRE, JEAN HENRI	The Life of the Caterpillar 107
FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE	Madame Bovary 28
FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE	Salammbo 118
FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE	Temptation of St. Anthony 92
FRANCE, ANATOLE	Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard 22
FRANCE, ANATOLE	The Queen Pedauque 110
FRANCE, ANATOLE	The Red Lily 7
FRANCE, ANATOLE	The Revolt of the Angels 11
FRANCE, ANATOLE	Thais 67
GAUTIER, THEOPHILE	Mlle. De Maupin 53
GEORGE, W. L.	A Bed of Roses 75
GILBERT, W. S.	The Mikado, Iolanthe, etc. 26
GILBERT, W. S.	Pinafore and Other Plays 113
GISSING, GEORGE	New Grub Street 125
GISSING, GEORGE	Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft 46
GONCOURT, E. AND J. DE	Renee Mauperin 76
GORKY, MAXIM	Creatures That Once Were Men and Other Stories 48
GOURMONT, REMY DE	A Night in the Luxembourg 120
GOURMONT, REMY DE	A Virgin Heart 131
HARDY, THOMAS	Jude the Obscure 135
HARDY, THOMAS	The Mayor of Casterbridge 17
HARDY, THOMAS	The Return of the Native 121
HAUPTMANN, GERHART	The Heretic of Soana 149
HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL	The Scarlet Letter 93
HEARN, LAFCADIO	Some Chinese Ghosts 130
HECHT, BEN	Erik Dorn 29
HOMER (*Chapman*)	The Iliad 166
HOMER (*Chapman*)	The Odyssey 167
HUDSON, W. H.	Green Mansions 89
HUDSON, W. H.	The Purple Land 24
HUXLEY, ALDOUS	A Virgin Heart 131
IBSEN, HENRIK	A Doll's House, Ghosts, etc. 6
IBSEN, HENRIK	Hedda Gabler, Pillars of Society, The Master Builder 36
IBSEN, HENRIK	The Wild Duck, Rosmersholm, The League of Youth 54
JAMES, HENRY	Daisy Miller, etc. 63
JAMES, HENRY	The Turn of the Screw 169
JAMES, WILLIAM	The Philosophy of William James 114
JOYCE, JAMES	Dubliners 124
JOYCE, JAMES	A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man 145

AUTHOR	TITLE AND NUMBER
KIPLING, RUDYARD	Soldiers Three 71
LAWRENCE, D. H.	The Rainbow 128
LAWRENCE, D. H.	Sons and Lovers 109
LEWISOHN, LUDWIG	Upstream 123
LOTI, PIERRE	Mme. Chrysantheme 94
MACY, JOHN	The Spirit of American Literature 56
MAUPASSANT, GUY DE	Love and Other Stories 72
MAUPASSANT, GUY DE	Mademoiselle Fifi, and Twelve Other Stories 8
MAUPASSANT, GUY DE	Une Vie 57
MELVILLE, HERMAN	Moby Dick 119
MEREDITH, GEORGE	Diana of the Crossways 14
MEREDITH, GEORGE	The Ordeal of Richard Feverel 134
MEREJKOWSKI, DMITRI	The Death of the Gods 153
MEREJKOWSKI, DMITRI	The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci 138
MISCELLANEOUS	An Anthology of American Negro Literature 163
	A Modern Book of Criticism 81
	Best Ghost Stories 73
	Best American Humorous Short Stories 87
	Best Russian Short Stories 18
	Evolution in Modern Thought 37
	Four Famous Greek Plays 158
	Fourteen Great Detective Stories 144
	Great Modern Short Stories 168 Edited by Grant Overton and including stories by Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Sherwood Anderson, Glenway Westcott, E. M. Forster, etc.
	Outline of Abnormal Psychology 152
	Outline of Psychoanalysis 66
MOLIERE	Plays 78
MOORE, GEORGE	Confessions of a Young Man 16
MORRISON, ARTHUR	Tales of Mean Streets 100
NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH	Beyond Good and Evil 20
NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH	Ecce Homo and the Birth of Tragedy 68
NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH	Genealogy of Morals 62
NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH	Thus Spake Zarathustra 9
O'NEILL, EUGENE	The Emperor Jones and The Straw 146
O'NEILL, EUGENE	Seven Plays of the Sea 111
PAINE, THOMAS	Writings 108
PATER, WALTER	The Renaissance 86
PATER, WALTER	Marius the Epicurean 90
PEPYS, SAMUEL	Samuel Pepys' Diary 103
PETRONIUS ARBITER	The Satyricon 156
POE, EDGAR ALLAN	Best Tales 82
PREVOST, ANTOINE	Manon Lescaut 85
PROUST, MARCEL	Swann's Way 59

AUTHOR	TITLE AND NUMBER
RABELAIS	Gargantua and Pantagruel 4
RENAN, ERNEST	The Life of Jesus 140
RODIN	64 Reproductions 41
ROSTAND, EDMOND	Cyrano de Bergerac 154
RUSSELL, BERTRAND	Selected Papers of Bertrand Russell 137
SALTUS, EDGAR	The Imperial Orgy 139
SCHNITZLER, ARTHUR	Anatol, Green Cockatoo, etc. 32
SCHNITZLER, ARTHUR	Bertha Garlan 39
SCHOPENHAUER	The Philosophy of Schopenhauer 52
SCHOPENHAUER	Studies in Pessimism 12
SCHREINER, OLIVE	The Story of an African Farm 132
SHAW, G. B.	An Unsocial Socialist 15
SMOLLETT, TOBIAS	Humphrey Clinker 159
SPINOZA	The Philosophy of Spinoza 60
STENDHAL	The Red and the Black 157
STERNE, LAURENCE	Tristram Shandy 147
STRINDBERG, AUGUST	Married 2
SUDERMANN, HERMANN	Dame Care 33
SUDERMANN, HERMANN	The Song of Songs 162
SWINBURNE, CHARLES	Poems 23
SYMONDS, JOHN A.	The Life of Michelangelo 49
THOMPSON, FRANCIS	Complete Poems 38
TOLSTOY, LEO	Redemption and Other Plays 77
TOLSTOY, LEO	The Death of Ivan Ilyitch and Four Other Stories 64
TOMLINSON, H. M.	The Sea and The Jungle 99
TURGENEV, IVAN	Fathers and Sons 21
TURGENEV, IVAN	Smoke 80
VAN LOON, HENDRIK W.	Ancient Man 105
VAN VECHTEN, CARL	Peter Whiffle 164
VILLON, FRANCOIS	Poems 58
VOLTAIRE	Candide 47
WELLS, H. G.	Ann Veronica 27
WHISTLER, J. McNEIL	The Art of Whistler with 32 Reproductions 150
WHITMAN, WALT	Leaves of Grass 97
WILDE, OSCAR	An Ideal Husband, A Woman of No Importance 84
WILDE, OSCAR	De Profundis 117
WILDE, OSCAR	Dorian Gray 1
WILDE, OSCAR	Poems 19
WILDE, OSCAR	Fairy Tales, Poems in Prose 61
WILDE, OSCAR	Salome, The Importance of Being Earnest, etc. 83
WILDER, THORNTON	The Cabala 155
WILSON, WOODROW	Selected Addresses and Papers 55
WOOLF, VIRGINIA	Mrs. Dalloway 96
YEATS, W. B.	Irish Fairy and Folk Tales 44
ZOLA, EMILE	Nana 142

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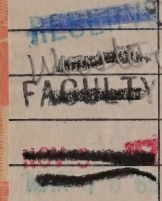

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